

S E L E C T
E S S A Y S
O N T H E
B E L L E S L E T T R E S.

By MR. D R Y D E N.

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ESSAYS



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2 T 2 E T 2 O 3



OF
Dramatic POESY,
AN
ESSAY.

— *Fungar vice cotis, acutum*
Reddere quae ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi.
Horat. de Arte Poet.

OF
DRAMATIC POESY,



E. S. Y.

—Fragor vice colis, acutum
Rehite quae forum vales, exors ipse secunda.
Horat. de Arte Poet.

To the Right Honourable

CHARLES

Earl of DORSET and MIDDLESEX,

Lord chamberlain of their Majesties household, knight of the most noble order of the garter, etc.

MY LORD,

AS I was lately reviewing my loose papers, among the rest I found this essay; the writing of which in this rude and indigested manner, wherein your lordship now sees it, served as an amusement to me in the country, when the violence of the last plague had driven me from the town. Seeing then our theaters shut up, I was engaged in these kind of thoughts with the same delight, with which men think upon their absent mistresses. I confess I find many things in this discourse, which I do not now approve; my judgment being not a little altered since the writing of it; but whether for the better or the worse I know not: neither indeed is it much material in an essay, where all I have said is problematical. For the way of writing plays in verse, which I have seemed to favour, I have, since that time, laid the practice of it aside, 'till I have more leisure, because I find it troublesome and slow.

vi DEDICATION.

But I am no way altered from my opinion of it, at least with any reasons which have opposed it. For your lordship may easily observe, that none are very violent against it, but those who either have not attempted it, or who have ill succeeded in their attempt. It is enough for me to have your lordship's example for my excuse in that little which I have done in it; and I am sure my adversaries can bring no such arguments against verse, as those with which the fourth act of Pompey will furnish me in its defence. Yet, My lord, you must suffer me a little to complain of you, that you too soon withdraw from us a contentment, of which we expected the continuance, because you gave it us so early. It is a revolt, without occasion, from your party, where your merits had already raised you to the highest commands, and where you have not the excuse of other men, that you have been ill used, and therefore laid down arms. I know no other quarrel you can have to verse, than that which Spurlin had to his beauty, when he tore and mangled the features of his face, only because they pleased too well the sight. It was an honour which seemed to wait for you, to lead out a new colony of writers from the mother-nation: And upon the first spreading of your ensigns, there had been many in a readiness to have followed so fortunate a leader; if not all, yet the better part of poets.

*Pars indocili melior grege; mollis et expes
Innominata perprimat cubilia.*

I am almost of opinion, that we should force you to accept of the command, as sometimes the

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Praetorian bands have compelled their captains to receive the empire. The court, which is the best and surest judge of writing, has generally allowed of verse; and in the town it has found favourers of wit and quality. As for your own particular, My lord, you have yet youth and time enough, to give part of them to the divertisement of the public, before you enter into the serious and more unpleasant business of the world. That, which the French poet said of the temple of love, may be as well applied to the temple of the muses. The words, as near as I can remember them, were these:

*Le jeune homme, a mauvaise Grace,
N'ayant pas adoré dans le Temple d'Amour;
Il faut qu'il entre, et pour le sage
Si ce n'est pas son vray séjour,
C'est un giste sur son passage.*

I leave the words to work their effect upon your lordship in their own language, because no other can so well express the nobleness of the thought; and wish you may be soon called to bear a part in the affairs of the nation, where I know the world expects you, and wonders why you have been so long forgotten; there being no person amongst our young nobility, on whom the eyes of all men are so much bent. But, in the mean time, your lordship may imitate the course of nature, who gives us the flower before the fruit; that I may speak to you in the language of the muses, which I have taken from an excellent poem to the king:

*As nature, when she fruit designs, thinks fit
By beauteous blossoms to proceed to it;
And while she does accomplish all the spring,
Birds to her secret operations sing.*

I confess, I have no greater reason, in addressing this essay to your lordship, than that it might awaken in you the desire of writing something, in whatever kind it be, which might be an honour to our age and country. And methinks it might have the same effect on you, which Homer tells us the sight of the Greeks and Trojans, before the fleet, had on the spirit of Achilles; who, tho' he had resolved not to engage, yet found a martial warmth to steal upon him, at the sight of blows, the sound of trumpets, and the cries of fighting men. For my own part, if, in treating of this subject, I sometimes dissent from the opinion of better wits, I declare it is not so much to combat their opinions, as to defend my own, which were first made public. Sometimes, like a scholar in a fencing-school, I put forth myself, and show my own ill play, on purpose to be better taught. Sometimes I stand desperately to my arms, like the foot when deserted by their horse, not in hope to overcome, but only to yield on more honourable terms. And yet, my lord, this war of opinions, you well know, has fallen out among the writers of all ages, and sometimes betwixt friends. Only it has been prosecuted by some, like pedants, with violence of words; and managed by others, like gentlemen, with candour and civility. Even Tully had a controversy with his dear Atticus; and in one of his dialogues makes him sustain the

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part of an enemy in philosophy, who in his letters is his confident of state, and made privy to the most weighty affairs of the Roman senate. And the same respect which was paid by Tully to Atticus, we find returned to him afterwards by Caesar, on a like occasion, who, answering his book in praise of Cato, made it not so much his business to condemn Cato, as to praise Cicero.

But that I may decline some part of the encounter with my adversaries, whom I am neither willing to combate, nor well able to resist; I will give your lordship the relation of a dispute betwixt some of our wits on the same subject, in which they did not only speak of plays in verse, but mingled, in the freedom of discourse, some things of the ancient, many of the modern, ways of writing; comparing those with these, and the wits of our nation with those of others: It is true, they differed in their opinions, as it is probable they would: neither do I take upon me to reconcile, but to relate them: and that as Tacitus professes of himself, *Sine studio partium aut ira*; without passion or interest; leaving your lordship to decide it in favour of which part you shall judge most reasonable, and withal, to pardon the many errors of

Your Lordship's

most obedient humble servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

TO THE
READER.

THE drift of the ensuing discourse was chiefly to vindicate the honour of our English writers, from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them. This I intimate, lest any should think me so exceeding vain, as to teach others an art, which they understand much better than myself. But if this incorrect essay, written in the country, without the help of books, or advice of friends, shall find any acceptance in the world, I promise to myself a better success of the second part, wherein I shall more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written either in this, the epique, or the lyrique way.

A N
E S S A Y
O F
D R A M A T I C P O E S Y.

IT was that memorable day, in the first summer of the late war, when our navy ingaged the Dutch: A day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed fleets which any age had ever seen, disputed the command of the greater half of the globe, the commerce of nations, and the riches of the universe. While these vast floating bodies, on either side, moved against each other in parallel lines, and our country-men, under the happy conduct of his royal highness, went breaking, by little and little, into the line of the enemies; the noise of the cannon from both navies reached our ears about the city: so that all men, being alarmed with it, and in a dreadful suspence of the event, which they knew was then deciding, every one went following the sound as his fancy led him; and leaving the town almost empty, some took towards the park, some cross the river, others down it; all seeking the noise in the depth of silence.

Amongst the rest, it was the fortune of Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius, and Neander, to be in company together: three of them persons whom their wit and

quality have made known to all the town; and whom I have chose to hide under these borrowed names, that they may not suffer by so ill a relation as I am going to make of their discourse.

Taking then a barge which a servant of Lisideius had provided for them, they made haste to shoot the bridge, and left behind them that great fall of waters which hindered them from hearing what they desired: after which, having disingaged themselves from many vessels which rode at anchor in the Thames, and almost blocked up the passage towards Greenwich, they ordered the watermen to let fall their oars more gently; and then every one favouring his own curiosity with a strict silence, it was not long ere they perceived the air to break about them like the noise of distant thunder, or of swallows in a chimney: those little undulations of sound, though almost vanishing before they reached them, yet still seeming to retain somewhat of their first horror which they had betwixt the fleets. After they had attentively listened till such time as the sound by little and little went from them; Eugenius lifting up his head, and taking notice of it, was the first who congratulated to the rest that happy omen of our nation's victory: adding, that we had but this to desire in confirmation of it, that we might hear no more of that noise which was now leaving the English coast. When the rest had concurred in the same opinion, Crites, a person of a sharp judgment, and somewhat too delicate a taste in wit, which the world hath mistaken in him for ill-nature, said, smiling to us, That if the concernment of this battle had not been so exceeding great, he could scarce have wished the victory at the price he knew he must pay for it, in being subject to the reading and hearing of so many ill verses, as he was sure would be

made on that subject. Adding, That no argument could escape some of those eternal rhymers, who watch a battle with more diligence than the ravens and birds of prey; and the worst of them surest to be first in upon the quarry, while the better able, either out of modesty writ not at all, or set that due value upon their poems, as to let them be often desired, and long expected. There are some of those impertinent people of whom you speak, answered Lysideius, who, to my knowledge, are already so provided, either way, that they can produce not only a panegyric upon the victory, but, if need be, a funeral elegy on the duke: wherein, after they have crowned his valour with many laurels, they will at last deplore the odds under which he fell, concluding that his courage deserved a better destiny. All the company smiled at the conceit of Lysideius; but Crites, more eager than before, began to make particular exceptions against some writers, and said, the public magistrate ought to send betimes to forbid them; and that it concerned the peace and quiet of all honest people, that ill poets should be as well silenced as seditious preachers. In my opinion, replied Eugenius, you pursue your point too far; for as to my own particular, I am so great a lover of poesy, that I could wish them all rewarded, who attempt but to do well; at least, I would not have them worse used than one of their brethren was by Sylla the dictator: *Quem in concione vidimus* (says Tully) *cum ei libellum malus poeta de populo subjecisset, quod epigramma in eum fecisset tantummodo alterius versibus longiusculis, statim ex iis rebus quas tunc vendebat jubere ei praemium tribui, sub ea conditione ne quid postea scriberet.* I could wish with all my heart, replied Crites, that many, whom we know, were as bountifully thanked upon the same condition, that they

would never trouble us again. For amongst others, I have a mortal apprehension of two poets, whom this victory, with the help of both her wings, will never be able to escape. It is easy to guess whom you intend, said Lisideius; and without naming them, I ask you, if one of them does not perpetually pay us with clenches upon words, and a certain clownish kind of raillery? If now and then he does not offer at a Catachresis or Clevelandism, wrestling and torturing a word into another meaning? In fine, if he be not one of those whom the French would call *un mauvais buffoon*? one who is so much a well-willer to the satire, that he intends, at least, to spare no man; and though he cannot strike a blow to hurt any, yet he ought to be punished for the malice of the action; as our witches are justly hanged, because they think themselves to be such: and suffer deservedly for believing they did mischief, because they meant it. You have described him, said Crites, so exactly, that I am afraid to come after you with my other extremity of poetry: he is one of those, who, having had some advantage of education and converse, knows better than the other what a poet should be, but puts it into practice more unluckily than any man; his style and matter are every where alike; he is the most calm, peaceable writer you ever read: he never disquiets your passions with the least concernment, but still leaves you in as even a temper as he found you; he is a very leveller in poetry, he creeps along with ten little words in every line, and helps out his numbers with *for so*, and *unto*, and all the pretty expletives he can find, till he drags them to the end of another line; while the sense is left tired half way behind it: he doubly starves all his verses, first, for want of thought, and then of expression; his poetry neither has wit in it, nor

seems to have it; like him in Martial: *Pauper videri Cinna vult, et est pauper:*

He affects plainness, to cover his want of imagination: when he writes the serious way, the highest flight of his fancy is some miserable antithesis, or seeming contradiction; and in the comic, he is still reaching at some thin conceit, the ghost of a jest; and that too flies before him, never to be caught. These swallows, which we see before us on the Thames, are the just resemblance of his wit: you may observe how near the water they stoop, how many proffers they make to dip, and yet how seldom they touch it: and when they do, it is but the surface: they skim over it but to catch a gnat, and then mount into the air and leave it. Well, gentlemen, said Eugenius, you may speak your pleasure of these authors; but though I and some few more about the town may give you a peaceable hearing, yet assure yourselves, there are multitudes who would think you malicious, and them injured; especially him whom you first described. He is the very Withers of the city: they have bought more editions of his works than would serve to lay under all their pies at the lord mayor's Christmas. When his famous poem first came out in the year 1660, I have seen them reading it in the midst of Change-time; nay, so vehement they were at it, that they lost their bargain by the candles ends; but what will you say if he has been received amongst great persons? I can assure you, this day, he is the envy of one, who is lord in the art of quibbling; and who does not take it well, that any man should intrude so far into his province. All I would wish, replied Crites, is, That they, who love his writings, may still admire him, and his fellow poets; *qui Bavium non odit, etc.* is curse sufficient. And farther, added Lifideius, I believe there is

no man who writes well, but would think he had hard measure, if their admirers should praise any thing of his: *Nam quos contemnimus, eorum quoque laudes contemnimus.* There are so few who write well, in this age, said Crites, that, methinks, any praises should be welcome; they neither rise to the dignity of the last age, nor to any of the ancients; and we may cry out of the writers of this time, with more reason than Petronius of his, *Pace vestra liceat dixisse, primi omnium eloquentiam perdidistis:* you have debauched the true old poetry so far, that nature, which is the soul of it, is not in any of your writings.

If your quarrel, said Eugenius, to those who now write, be grounded only on your reverence to antiquity, there is no man more ready to adore those great Greeks and Romans than I am: but on the other side, I cannot think so contemptibly of the age in which I live, or so dishonourably of my own country, as not to judge we equal the ancients in most kinds of poesy, and in some surpass them; neither know I any reason why I may not be as zealous for the reputation of our age, as we find the ancients themselves were in reverence to those who lived before them. For you hear your Horace saying,

*Indignor quidquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum, illepideve putetur, sed quia nuper.*

And after,

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit,

Scire velim pretium chartis quotus arroget annus?

But I see I am ingaging in a wide dispute, where the arguments are not like to reach close on either side; for poesy is of so large an extent, and so many both of the ancients and moderns have done well in all kinds of it, that, in citing one against the other, we shall take up more time this evening, than

each man's occasions will allow him: therefore I would ask Crites to what part of poesy he would confine his arguments, and whether he would defend the general cause of the ancients against the moderns, or oppose any age of the moderns against this of ours?

Crites, a little while considering upon this demand, told Eugenius, that, if he pleased, he would limit their dispute to *Dramatic Poesy*; in which he thought it not difficult to prove, either that the ancients were superior to the moderns, or the last age to this of ours.

Eugenius was somewhat surprized, when he heard Crites make choice of that subject; For ought I see, said he, I have undertaken a harder province than I imagined; for though I never judged the plays of the Greek or Roman poets comparable to ours; yet on the other side, those we now see acted come short of many which were written in the last age: but my comfort is, if we are overcome, it will be only by our own country-men: and if we yield to them in this one part of poesy, we more surpass them in all the other: for in the epique or lyric way it will be hard for them to shew us one such amongst them, as we have many now living, or who lately were. They can produce nothing so courtly writ, or which expresses so much the conversation of a gentleman, as Sir John Suckling; nothing so even, sweet, and flowing, as Mr. Waller: nothing so majestic, so correct, as Sir John Denham; nothing so elevated, so copious, and full of spirit, as Mr. Cowley: as for the Italian, French, and Spanish plays, I can make it evident, that those who now write, surpass them; and that the drama is wholly ours.

All of them were thus far of Eugenius his opinion, that the sweetness of English verse was never un-

derstood or practised by our fathers; even Crites himself did not much oppose it: and every one was willing to acknowledge how much our poesy is improved, by the happiness of some writers yet living; who first taught us to mould our thoughts into easy and significant words; to retrench the superfluities of expression, and to make our rhyme so properly a part of the verse, that it should never mislead the sense, but itself be led and governed by it.

Eugenius was going to continue this discourse, when Lisideius told him that it was necessary, before they proceeded further, to take a standing measure of their controversy; for how was it possible to be decided who writ the best plays, before we know what a play should be? But, this once agreed on by both parties, each might have recourse to it, either to prove his own advantages, or to discover the failings of his adversary.

He had no sooner said this, but all desired the favour of him to give the definition of a play; and they were the more importunate, because neither Aristotle, nor Horace, nor any other, who had writ of that subject, had ever done it.

Lisideius, after some modest denials, at last confessed he had a rude notion of it; indeed rather a description than a definition: but which served to guide him in his private thoughts, when he was to make a judgment of what others writ: that he conceived a play ought to be; *A just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject; for the delight and instruction of mankind.*

This definition (though Crites raised a logical objection against it; that it was only *a genere et fine*, and so not altogether perfect;) was yet well received by the rest: and after they had given order to the

water-men to turn their barge, and row softly, that they might take the cool of the evening in their return; Crites, being desired by the company to begin, spoke on behalf of the ancients, in this manner.

If confidence preface a victory, Eugenius, in his own opinion, has already triumphed over the ancients; nothing seems more easy to him, than to overcome those whom it is our greatest praise to have imitated well: for we do not only build upon their foundations; but by their models. Dramatic Poesy had time enough, reckoning from Thespis, who first invented it, to Aristophanes, to be born, to grow up, and to flourish in maturity. It has been observed of arts and sciences, that in one and the same century they have arrived to great perfection; and no wonder, since every age has a kind of universal genius, which inclines those that live in it to some particular studies: the work then being pushed on by many hands must of necessity go forward.

Is it not evident, in these last hundred years, when the study of philosophy has been the business of all the *Virtuosi* in *Christendom*, that almost a new nature has been revealed to us? that more errors of the school have been detected, more useful experiments in philosophy have been made, more noble secrets in optics, medicine, anatomy, astronomy, discovered, than in all those credulous and doting ages from Aristotle to us? So true it is that nothing spreads more fast than science, when rightly and generally cultivated.

Add to this, the more than common emulation that was in those times of writing well; which tho' it be found in all ages, and all persons that pretend to the same reputation; yet poesy being then in more esteem than now it is, had greater honours decreed to the professors of it; and consequently

the rivalship was more high between them; they had judges ordained to decide their merit, and prizes to reward it; and historians have been diligent to record of Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Lycophron, and the rest of them, both who they were that vanquished in these wars of the theatre, and how often they were crowned; while the Asian kings and Grecian common-wealths scarce afforded them a nobler subject, than the unmanly luxuries of a debauched court, or giddy intrigues of a factious city. *Alit aemulatio ingenia, (saith Paterculus) et nunc invidia, nunc admiratio incitationem accendit*: Emulation is the spur of wit, and sometimes envy, sometimes admiration, quickens our endeavours.

But now since the rewards of honour are taken away, that virtuous emulation is turned into direct malice; yet so slothful, that it contents itself to condemn and cry down others, without attempting to do better; it is a reputation too unprofitable, to take the necessary pains for it; yet wishing they had it, that desire is incitement enough to hinder others from it. And this, in short, Eugenius, is the reason, why you have now so few good poets; and so many severe judges. Certainly, to imitate the ancients well, much labour and strong study is required: which pains, I have already shewn, our poets would want encouragement to take, if yet they had ability to go through the work. Those ancients have been faithful imitators, and wise observers of that nature which is so torn and ill represented in our plays; they have handed down to us a perfect resemblance of her; which we, like ill copyers, neglecting to look on, have rendered monstrous, and disfigured. But, that you may know how much you are indebted to those your masters, and be ashamed to have so ill requited them; I must remem-

ber you, that all the rules by which we practise the drama at this day, (either such as relate to the justness and symmetry of the plot; or the episodical ornaments, such as descriptions, narrations, and other beauties, which are not essential to the play;) were delivered to us from the observations which Aristotle made, of those poets, who either lived before him, or were his contemporaries: we have added nothing of our own, except we have the confidence to say our wit is better; of which none boast in this our age, but such as understand not theirs. Of that book which Aristotle has left us, *πρὸς τὴν Πoιητικὴν*, Horace his art of poetry is an excellent comment, and, I believe, restores to us that second book of his concerning comedy, which is wanting in him.

Out of these two have been extracted the famous rules which the French call, *Des trois unitez*, or, The three unities, which ought to be observed in every regular play; namely, of time, place and action.

The unity of time they comprehend in twenty four hours, the compass of a natural day; or as near it as can be contrived: and the reason of it is obvious to every one, that the time of the feigned action, or fable of the play, should be proportioned as near as can be to the duration of that time in which it is represented; since therefore all plays are acted on the theatre in a space of time much within the compass of twenty four hours, that play is to be thought the nearest imitation of nature, whose plot or action is confined within that time; and, by the same rule which concludes this general proportion of time, it follows, that all the parts of it are (as near as may be) to be equally sub-divided; namely, that one act take not up the supposed time of half a day; which

is out of proportion to the rest; since the other four are then to be straitened within the compass of the remaining half; for it is unnatural, that one act, which being spoke or written, is not longer than the rest, should be supposed longer by the audience. It is therefore the poet's duty, to take care that no act should be imagined to exceed the time in which it is represented on the stage; and that the intervals and inequalities of time be supposed to fall out between the acts.

This rule of time how well it has been observed by the ancients, most of their plays will witness; you see them in their tragedies (wherein to follow this rule, is certainly most difficult) from the very beginning of their plays, falling close into that part of the story, which they intend for the action or principal object of it: leaving the former part to be delivered by narration: so that they set the audience, as it were, at the post where the race is to be concluded: and saving them the tedious expectation of seeing the poet set out and ride the beginning of the course, they suffer you not to behold him, till he is in sight of the goal, and just upon you.

For the second unity, which is that of place, the ancients meant by it, That the scene ought to be continued through the play, in the same place where it was laid in the beginning: For the stage, on which it is represented, being but one and the same place, it is unnatural to conceive it many; and those far distant from one another. I will not deny, but by the variation of painted scenes, the fancy, which in these cases will contribute to its own deceit, may sometimes imagine it several places, with some appearance of probability; yet it still carries the greater likelihood of truth, if those places be supposed so near each other, as in the same town or city, which

may all be comprehended under the larger denomination of one place: for a greater distance will bear no proportion to the shortness of time, which is allotted in the acting, to pass from one of them to another. For the observation of this, next to the ancients, the French are to be most commended. They tie themselves so strictly to the unity of place, that you never see in any of their plays a scene changed in the middle of an act: If the act begins in a garden, a street, or chamber, it is ended in the same place; and that you may know it to be the same, the stage is so supplied with persons, that it is never empty all the time: he who enters second has business with him who was on before; and before the second quits the stage, a third appears who has business with him.

This Corneille calls *la liaison des scenes*, the continuity or joining of the scenes; and it is a good mark of a well contrived play, when all the persons are known to each other, and every one of them has some affairs with all the rest.

As for the third unity, which is that of action, the ancients meant no other by it than what the logicians do by their *Finis*, the end or scope of any action: that which is the first in intention, and last in execution: now the poet is to aim at one great and compleat action, to the carrying on of which all things in his play, even the very obstacles, are to be subservient; and the reason of this is as evident as any of the former.

For two actions, equally laboured and driven on by the writer, would destroy the unity of the poem; it would be no longer one play, but two: not but that there may be many actions in a play, as Ben. Johnson has observed in his *Discoveries*, but they must be all subservient to the great one, which our

language happily expresses in the name of under-plots: such as in Terence's Eunuch is the difference and reconciliation of Thais and Phaedria, which is not the chief business of the play; but promotes the marriage of Chaerea and Chremes's sister, principally intended by the poet. There ought to be but one action, says Corneille, that is, one complete action which leaves the mind of the audience in a full repose: but this cannot be brought to pass, but by many other imperfect actions which conduce to it, and hold the audience in a delightful suspense of what will be.

If by these rules (to omit any other drawn from the precepts and practice of the ancients) we should judge our modern plays; it is probable, that few of them would endure the trial: that which should be the business of a day takes up in some of them an age; instead of one action they are the epitomes of a man's life: and for one spot of ground (which the stage should represent) we are sometimes in more countries than the map can show us.

But if we will allow the ancients to have contrived well, we must acknowledge them to have written better. Questionless we are deprived of a great stock of wit in the loss of Menander amongst the Greek poets, and of Caecilius, Afranius, and Varius, among the Romans. We may guess at Menander's excellency, by the plays of Terence, who translated some of them; and yet wanted so much of him, that he was called by C. Caesar the half-Menander; and may judge of Varius, by the testimonies of Horace, Martial, and Velleius Paterculus. - It is probable that these, could they be recovered, would decide the controversy; but so long as Aristophanes and Plautus are extant; while the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca, are in our hands, I can

never see one of those plays which are now written, but it encreases my admiration of the ancients; and yet I must acknowledge further, that to admire them as we ought, we should understand them better than we do. Doubtless many things appear flat to us, the wit of which depended on some custom or story which never came to our knowledge; or perhaps on some criticism in their language, which being so long dead, and only remaining in their books, it is not possible they should make us understand perfectly. To read Macrobius, explaining the propriety and elegance of many words in Virgil, which I had before passed over without consideration, as common things, is enough to assure me that I ought to think the same of Terence; and that in the purity of his style (which Tully so much valued, that he ever carried his works about him) there is yet left in him great room for admiration, if I knew but where to place it. In the mean time, I must desire you to take notice, that the greatest man of the last age (Ben. Johnson) was willing to give place to them in all things: he was not only a professed imitator of Horace, but a learned plagiarist of all the others; you track him every where in their snow. If Horace, Lucan, Petronius Arbitr, Seneca, and Juvenal, had their own from him, there are few serious thoughts which are new in him; you will pardon me therefore, if I presume he loved their fashion when he wore their cloths. But since I have otherwise a great veneration for him, and you, Eugenius, prefer him above all other poets, I will use no further arguments to you than his example: I will produce before you father Ben. dressed in all the ornaments and colours of the ancients; you will need no other guide to our party, if you follow him; and whether you consider the bad plays of our age, or regard the

good plays of the last, both the best and worst of the modern poets will equally instruct you to admire the ancients.

Critics had no sooner left speaking, but Eugenius, who had waited with some impatience for it, thus began:

I have observed in your speech, that the former part of it is convincing, as to what the moderns have profited by the rules of the ancients; but in the latter you are careful to conceal how much they have excelled them: we own all the helps we have from them, and want neither veneration nor gratitude, while we acknowledge, that to overcome them we must make use of the advantages we have received from them; but to these assistances we have joined our own industry; for, had we sat down with a dull imitation of them, we might then have lost somewhat of the old perfection, but never acquired any that was new. We draw not therefore after their lines, but those of nature; and having the life before us, besides the experience of all they knew, it is no wonder if we hit some airs and features which they have missed. I deny not what you urge of arts and sciences, that they have flourished in some ages more than others; but your instance in philosophy makes for me; for if natural causes be more known now than in the time of Aristotle, because more studied, it follows, that poetry and other arts may, with the same pains, arrive still nearer to perfection; and, that granted, it will rest for you to prove, that they wrought more perfect images of human life, than we; which seeing in your discourse you have avoided to make good, it shall now be my task to shew you some part of their defects, and some few excellencies of the moderns; and I think there is none among us can imagine I do it enviously, or with pur-

pose to detract from them; for what interest of fame or profit can the living lose by the reputation of the dead? On the other side, it is a great truth which Vellius Paterculus affirms, *Audita visis libentius laudamus; et praesentia invidia, praeterita admiratione prosequimur; et his nos obrui, illis instrui credimus*: That praise or censure is certainly the most sincere, which unbribed posterity shall give us.

Be pleased then, in the first place, to take notice, that the Greek poesy, which Crites has affirmed to have arrived to perfection in the reign of the old comedy, was so far from it, that the distinction of it into acts was not known to them; or if it were, it is yet so darkly delivered to us, that we cannot make it out.

All we know of it is from the singing of their chorus, and that too is so uncertain, that in some of their plays we have reason to conjecture they sung more than five times. Aristotle indeed divides the integral parts of a play into four: First, the Protasis, or entrance, which gives light only to the characters of the persons, and proceeds very little into any part of the action: Secondly, the Epitasis, or working up of the plot, where the play grows warmer: the design or action of it is drawing on, and you see something promising that it will come to pass: Thirdly, the Catastasis, called by the Romans, Status, the height, and full growth of the play: we may call it properly the counter-turn, which destroys that expectation, imbroils the action in new difficulties, and leaves you far distant from that hope in which it found you; as you may have observed in a violent stream, resisted by a narrow passage; it runs round to an eddy, and carries back the waters with more swiftness than it brought them on. Lastly,

the Catastrophe, which the Grecians called *λύσις*, the French, *le dénouement*, and we, the discovery or unravelling of the plot: there you see all things settling again upon their first foundations, and the obstacles which hindered the design or action of the play once removed, it ends with that resemblance of truth and nature, that the audience are satisfied with the conduct of it. Thus this great man delivered to us the image of a play, and I must confess it is so lively, that from thence much light has been derived to the forming it more perfectly into acts and scenes; but what poet first limited to five the number of the acts, I know not; only we see it so firmly established in the time of Horace, that he gives it for a rule in comedy; *Neu brevior quinto, neu sit productior actu*: So that you see the Grecians cannot be said to have consummated this art; writing rather by entrances, than by acts; and having rather a general indigested notion of a play, than knowing how, and where to bestow the particular graces of it.

But since the Spaniards at this day allow but three acts, which they call *Jornadas*, to a play; and the Italians, in many of theirs follow them; when I condemn the ancients, I declare it is not altogether because they have not five acts to every play, but because they have not confined themselves to one certain number; it is building an house without a model: and when they succeeded in such undertakings, they ought to have sacrificed to fortune, not to the muses.

Next, for the plot, which Aristotle called *ἡ μῦθος*, and often *τῶν πραγμάτων σύνδεσις*, and from him the Romans *Fabula*, it has already been judiciously observed by a late writer, that in their tragedies it was only some tale derived from Thebes or Troy, or at least something that happened in those two ages;

which was worn so thread-bare by the pens of all the epique poets, and even by tradition itself of the talkative Greeklings (as Ben. Johnson calls them) that before it came upon the stage, it was already known to all the audience : and the people; so soon as ever they heard the name of Oedipus, knew as well as the poet, that he had killed his father by a mistake, and committed incest with his mother, before the play ; that they were now to hear of a great plague, an oracle, and the ghost of Laius : so that they sat with a yawning kind of expectation, till he was to come with his eyes pulled out, and spake a hundred or more verses in a tragic tone, in complaint of his misfortunes. But one Oedipus, Hercules, or Medea, had been tolerable ; poor people, they scaped not so good cheap : they had still the *chapon bouillé* set before them, till their appetites were cloyed with the same dish, and the novelty being gone, the pleasure vanished : so that one main end of Dramatic Poesy in its definition, which was to cause delight, was of consequence destroyed.

In their comedies, The Romans generally borrowed their plots from the Greek poets ; and theirs was commonly a little girl stolen, or wandered from her parents, brought back unknown to the city, there got with child by some lewd young fellow ; who, by the help of his servant, cheats his father : and when her time comes, to cry *Juno Lucina fer opem* ; one or other sees a little box or cabinet which was carried away with her, and so discovers her to her friends, if some god do not prevent it, by coming down in a machine, and taking the thanks of it to himself.

By the plot you may guess much of the characters of the persons. An old father, who would willing-

ly before he dies see his son well married; his debauched son, kind in his nature to his mistress, but miserably in want of money; a servant or slave, who has so much wit to strike in with him, and help to dupe his father; a braggadochio captain, a parasite, and a lady of pleasure.

As for the poor honest maid, on whom the story is built, and who ought to be one of the principal actors in the play, she is commonly a mute in it: she has the breeding of the old Elizabeth way, which was for maids to be seen, and not to be heard; and it is enough you know she is willing to be married, when the fifth act requires it.

These are plots built after the Italian mode of houses; you see through them all at once; the characters are indeed the imitations of nature, but so narrow, as if they had imitated only an eye or an hand, and did not dare to venture on the lines of a face, or the proportion of a body.

But in how straight a compass soever they have bounded their plots and characters, we will pass it by, if they have regularly pursued them, and perfectly observed those three unities of time, place and action; the knowlege of which you say is derived to us from them. But, in the first place, give me leave to tell you, that the unity of place, however it might be practised by them, was never any of their rules: we neither find it in Aristotle, Horace, or any who have written of it, till in our age the French poets first made it a precept of the stage. The unity of time, even Terence himself (who was the best and most regular of them) has neglected: his *Heautontimoroumenos* or self-punisher takes up visibly two days, says Scaliger; the two first acts concluding the first day, the three last the day ensuing; and Euripides, in tying himself to one day, has committed an absurdity

never to be forgiven him: for in one of his tragedies, he has made Theseus go from Athens to Thebes, which was about forty English miles, under the walls of it to give battle, and appear victorious in the next act; and yet from the time of his departure to the return of the Nuntius, who gives the relation of his victory, Æthra and the chorus have but thirty six verses; which is not for every mile a verse.

The like error is as evident in Terence his Eunuch, when Laches, the old man, enters by mistake into the house of Thais, where betwixt his exit, and the entrance of Pythias, who comes to give ample relation of the disorders he has raised within, Parmeno, who was left upon the stage, has not above five lines to speak: *C'est bien employer un temps si court*, says the French poet, who furnished me with one of the observations: and almost all their tragedies will afford us examples of the like nature.

It is true, they have kept the continuity, or as you called it, *Liaison des scenes*, somewhat better: two do not perpetually come in together, talk, and go out together; and other two succeed them, and do the same throughout the act, which the English call by the name of single scenes; but the reason is, because they have seldom above two or three scenes, properly so called in every act; for it is to be accounted a new scene, not only every time the stage is empty, but every person who enters, tho' to others, makes it so; because he introduces a new business: now the plots of their plays being narrow, and the persons few, one of their acts was written in a less compass than one of our well-wrought scenes; and yet they are often deficient even in this. To go no further than Terence, you find in the Eunuch, Antipho entering single in the midst of the third act, af-

ter Chremes and Pythias were gone off: in the same play you have likewise Dorias beginning the fourth act alone; and after she has made a relation of what was done at the soldier's entertainment (which by the way was very inartificial, because she was presumed to speak directly to the audience, and to acquaint them with what was necessary to be known, but yet should have been so contrived by the poet, as to have been told by persons of the drama to one another, and so by them to have come to the knowledge of the people) she quits the stage, and Phaedria enters next, alone likewise: he also gives you an account of himself, and of his returning from the country, in monologue, to which unnatural way of narration Terence is subject in all his plays: in his *Adelphi* or *Brothers*, Syrus and Demea enter; after the scene was broken by the departure of Sostrata, Geta and Canthara; and indeed you can scarce look into any of his comedies, where you will not presently discover the same interruption.

But as they have failed both in laying of their plots, and in the management, swerving from the rules of their own art, by mis-representing nature to us, in which they have ill satisfied one intention of a play, which was delight; so in the instructive part they have erred worse: instead of punishing vice, and rewarding virtue, they have often shewn a prosperous wickedness, and an unhappy piety: they have set before us a bloody image of revenge in *Medea*; and given her dragons to convey her safe from punishment. A *Priam* and *Astyanax* murdered, and *Cassandra* ravished, and the lust and murder ending in the victory of him who acted them. In short, there is no indecorum in any of our modern plays, which, if I would excuse, I could not shadow with some authority from the ancients.

And one farther note of them let me leave you : tragedies and comedies were not writ then as they are now, promiscuously, by the same person ; but he who found his genius bending to the one, never attempted the other way. This is so plain, that I need not instance to you, that Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, never any of them writ a tragedy ; Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca, never meddled with comedy : the stock and buskin were not worn by the same poet. Having then so much care to excel in one kind, very little is to be pardoned them if they miscarried in it ; and this would lead me to the consideration of their wit, had not Crites given me sufficient warning not to be too bold in my judgment of it ; because the languages being dead, and many of the customs, and little accidents on which it depended, lost to us, we are not competent judges of it. But tho' I grant, that here and there we may miss the application of a proverb or a custom, yet a thing well said will be wit in all languages ; and tho' it may lose something in the translation, yet to him who reads it in the original, it is still the same : He has an idea of its excellency, tho' it cannot pass from his mind into any other expression or words than those in which he finds it. When Phædria in the Eunuch had a command from his mistress to be absent two days, and encouraging himself to go through with it, said, *Tandem ego non illa caream, si opus sit, vel totum triduum?* Parmeno, to mock the softness of his master, lifting up his hands and eyes, cries out as it were in admiration, *Hui! univ-
sum triduum!* the elegance of which *univ-
sum*, tho' it cannot be rendered in our language, yet leaves an impression on our souls : but this happens seldom in him, in Plautus oftner ; who is infinitely too bold

in his metaphors and coining words, out of which many times his wit is nothing; which questionless was one reason why Horace falls upon him so severely in these verses:

*Sed proavi nostri Plautinos et numeros, et
Laudavere sales, nimium patienter utrumque,
Ne dicam stolidæ.*

For Horace himself was cautious to obtrude a new word on his readers, and makes custom and common use the best measure of receiving it into our writings.

*Multa renascentur quæ nunc cecidere, cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.*

The not observing this rule is that which the world has blamed in our satirist Cleveland; to express a thing hard and unnaturally, is his new way of elocution: It is true, no poet but may sometimes use a Catachresis; Virgil does it,

Missaque ridenti Colocasia fundet Acantho,

In his eclogue of Pollio; and in his seventh *Eneid*,

*Mirantur et undæ,
Miratur nemus, insuetum fulgentia longe
Scuta viram fluvio, pictasque innare carinas.*

And Ovid once so modestly, that he asks leave to do it.

*Si verbo audacia detur,
Haud metum summi dixisse palatia coeli.*

Calling the court of Jupiter by the name of Augustus his palace, tho' in another place he is more bold, where he says, *Et longas visent Capitolia pom-*

pas. But to do this always, and never be able to write a line without it, tho' it may be admired by some few pedants, will not pass upon those who know that wit is best conveyed to us in the most easy language; and is most to be admired, when a great thought comes drest in words so commonly received, that it is understood by the meanest apprehensions, as the best meat is the most easily digested. But we cannot read a verse of Cleveland's without making a face at it, as if every word were a pill to swallow: he gives us many times a hard nut to break our teeth, without a kernel for our pains. So that there is this difference betwixt his Satires and doctor Donn's, That the one gives us deep thoughts in common language, tho' rough cadence; the other gives us common thoughts in abstruse words: It is true, in some places his wit is independent of his words, as in that of the rebel Scot:

*Had Cain been Scot, God would have chang'd his doom;
Not forc'd him wander, but confin'd him home.*

Si sic omnia dixisset! This is wit in all languages: It is like Mercury, never to be lost or killed: and so that other,

*For beauty, like white-powder, makes no noise,
And yet the silent hypocrite destroys.*

You see the last line is highly metaphorical, but it is so soft and gentle, that it does not shock us as we read it.

But, to return from whence I have digressed, to the consideration of the ancients writing and their wit, (of which, by this time, you will grant us in

some measure to be fit judges,) Tho' I see many excellent thoughts in Seneca; yet he, of them who had a genius most proper for the stage, was Ovid; he had a way of writing so fit to stir up a pleasing admiration and concernment, which are the objects of a tragedy, and to shew the various movements of a soul combating betwixt two different passions, that had he lived in our age, or in his own could have writ with our advantages, no man but must have yielded to him; and therefore, I am confident, the Medea is none of his; for though I esteem it for the gravity and sententiousness of it, which he himself concludes to be suitable to a tragedy, *Omne genus scripti gravitate tragoedia vincit*, yet it moves not my soul enough to judge that he, who in the epique way wrote things so near the drama, as the story of Myrrha, of Canus and Byblis, and the rest, should stir up no more concernment where he most endeavoured it. The master-piece of Seneca I hold to be that scene in the Troades, where Ulysses is seeking for Astryanax to kill him: there you see the tenderness of a mother, so represented in Andromache, that it raises compassion to a high degree in the reader, and bears the nearest resemblance of any thing in the tragedies of the ancients, to the excellent scenes of passion in Shakespear, or in Fletcher: for love scenes you will find few among them, their tragic poets dealt not with that soft passion, but with lust, cruelty, revenge, ambition, and those bloody actions they produced; which were more capable of raising horror than compassion in an audience: leaving love untouched, whose gentleness would have tempered them, which is the most frequent of all the passions, and which being the private concernment of every person, is soothed, by viewing its own image in a public entertainment.

Among their comedies, we find a scene or two of tenderness, and that where you would least expect it, in Plautus; but to speak generally, their lovers say little, when they see each other, but *anima mea, vita mea*; *Carum luxu*, as the women in Juvenal's time used to cry out in the fury of their kindness: any sudden gust of passion (as an ecstasy of love in an unexpected meeting) cannot better be expressed than in a word, and a sigh, breaking one another. Nature is dumb on such occasions, and to make her speak, would be to represent her unlike herself. But there are a thousand other concernments of lovers, as jealousies, complaints, contrivances, and the like, where not to open their minds at large to each other, were to be wanting to their own love, and to the expectation of the audience; who watch the movements of their minds, as much as the changes of their fortunes. For the imagining of the first is properly the work of a poet, the latter he borrows from the historian.

Eugenius was proceeding in that part of his discourse, when Crites interrupted him. I see, said he, Eugenius and I are never like to have this question decided betwixt us; for he maintains the moderns have acquired a new perfection in writing, I can only grant they have altered the mode of it. Homer described his heroes, men of great appetites, lovers of beef broiled upon the coals, and good fellows; contrary to the practice of the French romances, whose heroes neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep for love. Virgil makes Æneas a bold avower of his own virtues,

Sûm pius Æneas fama super æthera notus,
which in the civility of our poets is the character of

a Fanfaron or Hector: for with us the knight takes occasion to walk out, or sleep, to avoid the vanity of telling his own story, which the trusty squire is ever to perform for him. So in their love-scenes, of which Eugenius spoke last, the ancients were more hearty, we more talkative: they writ love as it was then the mode to make it, and I will grant this much to Eugenius, that perhaps one of their poets, had he lived in our age,

Si foret hoc nostrum fato delapsus in ævum,

(as Horace says of Lucilius) he had altered many things; not that they were not natural before, but that he might accommodate himself to the age in which he lived; yet in the mean time we are not to conclude any thing rashly against those great men, but preserve to them the dignity of masters, and give that honour to their memories, (*Quos Libitina sacravit;*) part of which we expect may be paid to us in future times.

This moderation of Crites, as it was pleasing to all the company, so it put an end to that dispute; which Eugenius, who seemed to have the better of the argument, would urge no further. But Lisideius, after he had acknowledged himself of Eugenius his opinion concerning the ancients; yet told him he had forbore, till his discourse was ended, to ask him, why he preferred the English plays above those of other nations? And whether we ought not to submit our stage to the exactness of our next neighbours?

Tho', said Eugenius, I am at all times ready to defend the honour of my country against the French, and to maintain, we are as well able to vanquish them with our pens, as our ancestors have been with their swords: yet, if you please, added he, looking upon

Neander, I will commit this cause to my friend's management; his opinion of our plays is the same with mine: and besides, there is no reason, that Crites and I, who have now left the stage, should re-enter so suddenly upon it; which is against the laws of comedy.

If the question had been stated, replied Lifideius, who had writ best, the French or English, forty years ago, I should have been of your opinion, and adjudged the honour to our own nation; but since that time, (said he, turning towards Neander) we have been so long together bad Englishmen, that we had no leisure to be good poets; Beaumont, Fletcher, and Johnson, (who were only capable of bringing us to that degree of perfection which we have) were just then leaving the world; as if in an age of so much horror, wit and those milder studies of humanity had no farther business among us. But the muses, who even follow peace, went to plant in another country; it was then that the great cardinal of Richlieu began to take them into his protection; and that, by his encouragement, Corneille and some other French-men reformed their theatre, (which before was as much below ours, as it now surpasses it and the rest of Europe;) But because Crites, in his discourse for the ancients, has prevented me, by observing many rules of the stage, which the moderns have borrowed from them; I shall only, in short, demand of you, whether you are not convinced that of all nations the French have best observed them? in the unity of time you find them so scrupulous, that it yet remains a dispute among their poets, whether the artificial day of twelve hours, more or less, be not meant by Aristotle, rather than the natural one of twenty four; and consequently, whether all plays ought not to be reduced into that compass? This I

can testify, that in all their dramas writ within these last twenty years and upwards, I have not observed any that have extended the time to thirty hours. In the unity of place they are full as scrupulous; for many of their critics limit it to that very spot of ground where the play is supposed to begin; none of them exceed the compass of the same town or city.

The unity of action in all their plays is yet more conspicuous, for they do not burden them with under-plots, as the English do; which is the reason why many scenes of our tragi-comedies carry on a design that is nothing of kin to the main plot; and that we see two distinct webs in a play, like those in ill-wrought stuffs; and two actions, that is, two plays carried on together, to the confounding of the audience; who, before they are warm in their concerns for one part, are diverted to another; and by that means espouse the interest of neither. From hence likewise it arises, that the one half of our actors are not known to the other. They keep their distances as if they were Mountagues and Capulets, and seldom begin an acquaintance 'till the last scene of the fifth act, when they are all to meet upon the stage. There is no theatre in the world has any thing so absurd as the English tragi-comedy, it is a drama of our own invention, and the fashion of it is enough to proclaim it so; here a course of mirth, there another of sadness and passion, and a third of honour and a duel: thus in two hours and a half we run through all the fits of Bedlam. The French afford you as much variety on the same day, but they do it not so unseasonably, or *mal à propos*, as we; our poets present you the play and the farce together; and our stages still retain somewhat of the original civility of the red bull.

Atque ursum et pugiles media inter carmina poscunt.

The end of tragedies or serious plays, says Aristotle, is to beget admiration, compassion, or concernment; but are not mirth and compassion things incompatible? And is it not evident, that the poet must of necessity destroy the former by intermingling of the latter? That is, he must ruin the sole end and object of his tragedy to introduce somewhat that is forced into it, and is not of the body of it: would you not think that physician mad, who, having prescribed a purge, should immediately order you to take restrungents?

But to leave our plays, and return to theirs, I have noted one great advantage they have had in the plotting of their tragedies; that is, they are always grounded upon some known history; according to that of Horace, *Ex noto factum carmen sequar*; and in that they have so imitated the ancients, that they have surpassed them. For the ancients, as was observed before, took for the foundation of their plays some poetical fiction, such as under that consideration could move but little concernment in the audience; because they already know the event of it. But the French goes farther:

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,

Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet inum.

He so interweaves truth with probable fiction, that he puts a pleasing fallacy upon us, mends the intrigues of fate, and dispenses with the severity of history, to reward the virtue which has been rendered to us there unfortunate. Sometimes the story has left the success so doubtful, that the writer is free, by the

privilege of a poet, to take that which of two or more relations will best suit with his design: as for example, In the death of Cyrus, whom Justin and some others report to have perished in the Scythian war, but Xenophon affirms to have died in his bed of extream old age. Nay more, when the event is past dispute, even then we are willing to be deceived, and the poet, if he contrives it with appearance of truth, has all the audience of his party; at least during the time his play is acting: so naturally we are kind to virtue, when our own interest is not in question, that we take it up as the general concernment of mankind. On the other side, if you consider the historical plays of Shakespear, they are rather so many chronicles of kings, or the business many times of thirty or forty years, cramp'd into a representation of two hours and a half, which is not to imitate or paint nature, but rather to draw her in miniature, to take her in little; to look upon her through the wrong end of a perspective, and receive her images not only much less, but infinitely more imperfect than the life: This, instead of making a play delightful, renders it ridiculous.

Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

For the spirit of man cannot be satisfied but with truth, or at least verisimilitude; and a poem is to contain, if not *τὰ ἔντροπα*, yet *ἐντροπικὴν ὁμιλίαν*, as one of the Greek poets has expressed it.

Another thing in which the French differ from us and from the Spaniards, is, that they do not embarrass or cumber themselves with too much plot: they only represent so much of a story as will constitute one whole and great action sufficient for a play; we, who undertake more, do but multiply adventures; which not being produced from one another, as ef-

fects from causes, but, barely following, constitute many actions in the drama, and consequently make it many plays.

But by pursuing closely one argument, which is not cloyed with many turns, the French have gained more liberty for verse, in which they write: they have leisure to dwell on a subject which deserves it; and to represent the passions (which we have acknowledged to be the poet's work) without being hurried from one thing to another, as we are in the plays of Calderon, which we have seen lately upon our theaters, under the name of Spanish plots. I have taken notice but of one tragedy of ours, whose plot has that uniformity and unity of design in it, which I have commended in the French; and that is *Rollo*, or rather, under the name of *Rollo*, The story of *Bassianus* and *Geta* in *Herodian*; there indeed the plot is neither large nor intricate, but just enough to fill the minds of the audience, not to cloy them. Besides, you see it founded upon the truth of history, only the time of the action is not reduceable to the strictness of the rules; and you see in some places a little farce mingled, which is below the dignity of the other parts; and in this all our poets are extremely peccant; even *Ben Johnson* himself in *Sejanus* and *Catiline* has given us this olio of a play, this unnatural mixture of comedy and tragedy, which to me sounds just as ridiculously as the history of *David* with the merry humours of *Goliath*. In *Sejanus* you may take notice of the scene betwixt *Livia* and the physician, which is a pleasant satire upon the artificial helps of beauty: In *Catiline* you may see the parliament of women; the little envies of them to one another; and all that passes betwixt *Curio* and *Fulvia*: scenes admirable in their kind, but of an ill mingle with the rest.

But I return again to the French writers; who, as I have said, do not burden themselves too much with plot, which has been reproached to them by an ingenious person of our nation as a fault; for he says, they commonly make but one person considerable in a play; they dwell on him, and his concerns; while the rest of the persons are only subservient to set him off. If he intends this by it, that there is one person in the play who is of greater dignity than the rest, he must tax, not only theirs, but those of the ancients, and, which he would be loth to do, the best of ours, for it is impossible but that one person must be more conspicuous in it than any other; and consequently the greatest share in the action must devolve on him. We see it so in the management of all affairs: even in the most equal aristocracy, the balance cannot be so justly poised, but some one will be superior to the rest; either in parts, fortune, interest, or the consideration of some glorious exploit; which will reduce the greatest part of business into his hands.

But, if he would have us to imagine, that in exalting one character the rest of them are neglected, and that all of them have not some share or other in the action of the play; I desire him to produce any of Corneille's tragedies, wherein every person (like so many servants in a well-governed family) has not some employment, and who is not necessary to the carrying on of the plot, or at least to your understanding it.

There are indeed some protatic persons in the ancients, whom they make use of in their plays, either to hear, or give the relation: but the French avoid this with great address, making their narrations only to, or by such, who are some way interested in

the main design. And now I am speaking of relations, I cannot take a fitter opportunity to add this in favour of the French, that they often use them with better judgment and more *à propos* than the English do. Not that I commend narrations in general, but there are two sorts of them: one of those things which are antecedent to the play, and are related to make the conduct of it more clear to us; but it is a fault to chuse such subjects for the stage as will force us on that rock; because we see they are seldom listened to by the audience, and that is many times the ruin of the play: For, being once let pass without attention, the audience can never recover themselves to understand the plot; and indeed it is somewhat unreasonable, that they should be put to so much trouble, as, that to comprehend what passes in their sight, they must have recourse to what was done, perhaps, ten or twenty years ago.

But there is another sort of relations, that is, of things happening in the action of the play, and supposed to be done behind the scenes: and this is many times both convenient and beautiful: For, by it the French avoid the tumult, to which we are subject in England, by representing duels, battles, and the like; which renders our stage too like the theaters where they fight prizes. For what is more ridiculous than to represent an army with a drum and five men behind it; all which, the heroe of the other side is to drive in before him? or to see a duel fought, and one slain with two or three thrusts of the foils, which we know are so blunted, that we might give a man an hour to kill another in good earnest with them?

I have observed, that in all our tragedies the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die; it is the most comic part of the whole play.

All passions may be lively represented on the stage, if to the well-writing of them the actor supplies a good commanded voice, and limbs that move easily, and without stiffness; but there are many actions which can never be imitated to a just height: dying especially is a thing which none but a Roman gladiator could naturally perform on the stage, when he did not imitate or represent, but do it; and therefore, it is better to omit the representation of it.

The words of a good writer, which describe it lively, will make a deeper impression of belief in us, than all the actor can insinuate into us, when he seems to fall dead before us; as a poet in the description of a beautiful garden, or a meadow, will please our imagination more than the place itself can please our sight. When we see death represented, we are convinced it is but fiction; but when we hear it related, our eyes (the strongest witnesses) are wanting, which might have undeceived us; and we are all willing to favour the slight when the poet does not too grossly impose on us. They, therefore, who imagine these relations would make no concernment in the audience, are deceived, by confounding them with the other, which are of things antecedent to the play; those are made often in cold blood (as I may say) to the audience; but these are warmed with our concerns, which were before awakened in the play. What the philosophers say of motion, that, when it is once begun, it continues of itself, and will do so to eternity without some stop put to it, is clearly true on this occasion; the soul, being already moved with the characters and fortunes of those imaginary persons, continues going of its own accord, and we are no more weary to hear what becomes of them when they are not on the stage, than we are to listen to the news of an absent mistress. But it is objected,

That if one part of the play may be related, then why not all? I answer, some parts of the action are more fit to be represented, some to be related. Corneille says judiciously, that the poet is not obliged to expose to view all particular actions which conduce to the principal: he ought to select such of them to be seen, which will appear with the greatest beauty, either by the magnificence of the show, or the vehemence of passions which they produce, or some other charm which they have in them, and let the rest arrive to the audience by narration. It is a great mistake in us to believe the French present no part of the action on the stage: every alteration or crossing of a design, every new-sprung passion, and turn of it, is a part of the action, and much the noblest, except we conceive nothing to be action till the players come to blows; as if the painting of the heroe's mind were not more properly the poet's work, than the strength of his body. Nor does this any thing contradict the opinion of Horace, where he tells us,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*—

For he says immediately after,

*Non tamen intus
Digna geri promer in scenam, multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praesens.*

Among which many he recounts some,

*Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,
Aut in avem Progne matetur, Cadmus in anguem, etc.*

That is, those actions which by reason of their cru-

erty will cause aversion in us, or by reason of their impossibility, unbelief, ought either wholly to be avoided by a poet, or only delivered by narration. To which we may have leave to add such as to avoid tumult, (as was before hinted) or to reduce the plot into a more reasonable compass of time, or for defect of beauty in them; are rather to be related than presented to the eye. Examples of all these kinds are frequent, not only among all the ancients, but in the best received of our English poets. We find Ben Johnson using them in his *Magnetic Lady*, where one comes out from dinner, and relates the quarrels and disorders of it to save the indecent appearance of them on the stage, and to abbreviate the story: and this in express imitation of Terence, who had done the same before him in his *Eunuch*, where Pythias makes the like relation of what had happened within at the soldier's entertainment. The relation, likewise, of *Sejanus's* death, and the prodigies before it, are remarkable; the one of which was hid from sight to avoid the horror and tumult of the representation; the other to shun the introducing of things impossible to be believed. In that excellent play, *The king and no king*, Fletcher goes yet farther; for the whole unravelling of the plot is done by narration in the fifth act, after the manner of the ancients; and it moves great concernment in the audience, though it be only a relation of what was done many years before the play. I could multiply other instances, but these are sufficient to prove, that there is no error in choosing a subject which requires this sort of narrations; in the ill management of them, there may.

But I find I have been too long in this discourse, since the French have many other excellencies not common to us; as that you never see any of their

plays end with a conversion, or simple change of will, which is the ordinary way which our poets use to end theirs. It shows little art in the conclusion of a dramatic poem, when they, who have hindered the felicity during the four acts, desist from it in the fifth, without some powerful cause to take them off their design; and though I deny not but such reasons may be found, yet it is a path that is cautiously to be trod, and the poet is to be sure he convinces the audience, that the motive is strong enough. As for example, the conversion of the usurer, in the *scornful lady*, seems to me a little forced; for being an usurer, which implies a lover of money to the highest degree of covetousness, (and such the poet has represented him) the account he gives for the sudden change is, that he has been duped by the wild young fellow, which in reason might render him more wary another time, and make him punish himself with harder fare and coarser cloths to get up again what he had lost: but that he should look on it as a judgment, and so repent, we may expect to hear in a sermon, but I should never indure it in a play.

I pass by this, neither will I insist on the care they take, that no person after his first entrance shall ever appear, but the business which brings him upon the stage shall be evident: which rule, if observed, must needs render all the events in the play more natural: for there you see the probability of every accident, in the cause that produced it; and that which appears chance in the play, will seem so reasonable to you, that you will there find it almost necessary: so that in the exit of the actor you have a clear account of his purpose and design in the next entrance: (though, if the scene be well wrought, the event will commonly deceive you) for there is nothing so absurd, says Corneille, as for an actor to

leave the stage, only because he has no more to say. I should now speak of the beauty of their rhyme, and the just reason I have to prefer that way of writing in tragedies before ours in blank-verse; but because it is partly received by us, and therefore not altogether peculiar to them, I will say no more of it in relation to their plays. For our own, I doubt not but it will exceedingly beautify them, and I can see but one reason why it should not generally obtain, that is, because our poets writes so ill in it. This indeed may prove a more prevailing argument than all others which are used to destroy it, and therefore, I am only troubled when great and judicious poets, and those who are acknowledged such, have writ or spoke against it; as for others, they are to be answered by that one sentence of an ancient author.

Sed ut primo ad consequendas eos quos priores ducimus accendimur, ita ubi aut praeteriri, aut aequari eos posse despicimur, studium cum spe senescit: quod scilicet, assequi non potest; sequi desinit; praeteritaque ea in quo animare non possumus, aliquid in quo nitamur, conquirimus.

Lisideius concluded in this manner; and Neander after a little pause thus answered him.

I shall grant Lisideius, without much dispute, a great part of what he has urged against us; for I acknowledge, that the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy, and decorum of the stage (to speak generally) with more exactness than the English. Farther I deny not but he has taxed us justly in some irregularities of ours which he has mentioned; yet, after all, I am of opinion, that neither our faults nor their virtues are considerable enough to place them above us.

But the lively imitation of nature being in the definition of a play, those which best fulfil that law,

ought to be esteemed superior to the others. It is true, those beauties of the French poetry are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poetry, which is imitation of humour and passions: and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biassed to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humours of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs. He, who will look upon theirs which have been written 'till these last ten years or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced, except *The Liar*, and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, and that part of Dorant acted with so much advantage as I am confident it never received in its own country, the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Johnson's. In the rest of Corneille's comedies you have little humour; he tells you himself his way is first to shew two lovers in good intelligence with each other; in the working up of the play, to embroil them by some mistake, and in the latter end to clear it, and reconcile them.

But of late years Moliere, the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating as far off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragi-comedies, since the death of cardinal Richelieu, which Lisideius, and many others, not observing, have commended that in them

for a virtue, which they themselves no longer practise. Most of their new plays are, like some of ours, derived from the Spanish novels. There is scarce one of them without a veil, and a trusty Diego, who drolls much after the rate of the Adventures. But their humours, if I may grace them with that name, are so thin sown, that never above one of them comes up in any play: I dare take upon me to find more variety of them in some one play of Ben Johnson's, than in all theirs together; as he who has seen the Alchymist, the Silent Woman, or Bartholomew-Fair, cannot but acknowledge with me.

I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular; but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often, which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with Liscideius, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it: he tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant, in a much shorter time than is required to this? And does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter? The old rule of logic might have convinced him. That contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our

masse has bewixt the *son*, which we find a relief to us from the best plots and language of the stage, if the discourses have been long; I must therefore have stronger arguments ere I am convinced, that compassion and mirth in the same subject destroy each other; and in the mean time, cannot but conclude, to the honour of our nation, that we have invented, increased, and perfected, a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragedy and comedy.

And this leads me to wonder why Liscides and many others should try up the barrenness of the French plots, above the variety and copiousness of the English. Their plots are single, they carry on one design, which is pushed forward by all the actors, every scene in the play contributing and moving towards it: Our plays, besides the main design, have under-plots, or by-concernments, or less considerable persons, and intrigues, which are carried on with the motion of the main plot: as they say the orb of the fixed stars, and those of the planets, tho' they have motions of their own, are whirled about by the motion of the *primum mobile*, in which they are contained: that similitude expresses much of the English stage: for if contrary motions may be found in nature to agree; if a planet can go east and west at the same time; one way by virtue of his own motion, the other by the force of the first mover; it will not be difficult to imagine how the under-plot, which is only different, not contrary to the great design, may naturally be conducted along with it.

Eugenius has already shewn us, from the confession of the French poets, that the unity of action is sufficiently preserved, if all the imperfect actions of

the play are conducing to the main design: but when those petty intrigues of a play are so ill ordered, that they have no coherence with the other, I must grant that *Lisideius* has reason to tax that want of due connexion; for coordination in a play is as dangerous and unnatural as in a state. In the mean time, he must acknowledge our variety, if well ordered, will afford a greater pleasure to the audience.

As for his other argument, that by pursuing one single theme they gain an advantage to express and work up the passions, I wish any example he could bring from them would make it good: for I confess their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read: neither indeed is it possible for them, in the way they take, so to express passion, as that the effects of it should appear in the concernment of an audience, their speeches being so many declamations, which tire us with the length; so that instead of persuading us to grieve for their imaginary heroes, we are concerned for our own trouble, as we are in tedious visits of bad company; we are in pain till they are gone. When the French stage came to be reformed by cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced, to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the *Cinna* and the *Pompey*, they are not so properly to be called plays, as long discourses of reason of state: and *Polieucte* in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons; nay, they account it the grace of their parts, and think themselves disparaged by the poet, if they may not twice or thrice in a play entertain the audience with a speech of an hundred lines. I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French; for as we, who are a more sullen people,

come to be diverted at our plays; so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come hither to make themselves more serious; and this I conceive to be one reason, why comedies are more pleasing to us, and tragedies to them. But to speak generally, it cannot be denied, that short speeches and replies are more apt to move the passions, and breed concernment in us, than the other: for it is unnatural for any one in a gust of passion, to speak long together; or for another, in the same condition, to suffer him without interruption. Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain; they are quickly up, and if the containment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us: but a long sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces; the greatest pleasure of the audience is a chase of wit kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays, to a much higher degree of perfection, than the French poets can reasonably hope to reach.

There is another part of Lisleus his discourse, in which he has rather excused our neighbours than commended them; that is, for aiming only to make one person considerable in their plays. It is very true what he has urged, That one character in all plays, even without the poet's care, will have advantage of all the others; and that the design of the whole drama will chiefly depend upon it. But this hinders not that there may be more shining characters in the play; many persons of a second magnitude, nay, some so very near, so almost equal to the first, that greatness may be opposed to greatness, and all the persons may be made considerable; and they will flourish.

not only by their quality, but their action. It is evident, that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety of the piece. If then the parts are managed so regularly, that the beauty of the whole be kept intire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design: where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it. And that all this is practicable, I can produce, for examples, many of our English plays: as the *Maids Tragedy*, the *Alchymist*, the *Silken Woman*; I was going to have named the *Fox*, but that the unity of design therein is not exactly observed in it; for there appear two actions in the play; the first naturally ending with the fourth act; the second forced from it in the fifth: which yet is the less to be condemned in him, because the disguise of *Volpone*, though it suited not with his character as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with that of a voluptuary: and by it the poet gained the end at which he aimed, the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue, both which that disguise produced. So that to judge equally of it, it was an excellent fifth act, but not so naturally proceeding from the former.

But to leave this, and pass to the latter part of *Lisideus* his discourse, which concerns actions, I must acknowledge with him, that the French have reason to hide that part of the action which would occasion too much tumult on the stage, and to chuse rather to have it made known by narration to the audience. Farther, I think it very convenient, for the reasons he has given, that all incredible actions were removed; but, whether custom has so inflamed itself into our country-men, or nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will scarce-

ly suffer combat and other objects of horror to be taken from them. And indeed, the indecency of tumult is all which can be objected against fighting: for why may not our imagination as well suffer itself to be deluded with the probability of it, as with any other thing in the play? For my part, I can with as great ease persuade myself, that the blows are given in good earnest, as I can, that they who strike them are kings or princes, or those persons which they represent. For objects of incredibility, I would be satisfied from *Lisideus*, whether we have any so removed from all appearance of truth, as are those of *Corasile's Andromede*? A play which has been fragmentated the most of any he has writ. If the *Perseus*, or the son of an heathen god, the *Pegasus*, and the monster, were not capable to shock a strong belief, let him blame any representation of ours hereafter. Those indeed were objects of delight; yet the reason is the same as to the probability: for he makes it not a ballet or masque, but a play, which is to resemble truth. But for death, that it ought not to be represented, I have, besides the arguments alleged by *Lisideus*, the authority of Ben Johnson, who has forborn it in his tragedies; for both the death of *Sejanus* and *Cailline* are related: though in the latter I cannot but observe one irregularity of that great poet; he has removed the scene in the same act, from Rome to *Cailline's* army, and from thence again to Rome; and besides, he allowed a very inconsiderable time after *Cailline's* speech, for the striking of the battle, and the return of *Patricius*, who is to relate the event of it to the senate: which I should not animadvert on him, who was otherwise a painful observer of *et veritas*, on the decorum of the stage, if he had not used extreme severity in his judg-

ment on the incomparable Shakespear for the same fault. To conclude on this subject of relations, if we are to be blamed for shewing too much of the action, the French are as faulty for discovering too little of it: A mean betwixt both should be observed by every judicious writer, so as the audience may neither be left unsatisfied by not seeing what is beautiful, or shocked by beholding what is either incredible or indecent. I hope I have already proved in this discourse, that though we are not altogether so punctual as the French, in observing the laws of comedy; yet our errors are so few, and little, and those things wherein we excel them so considerable, that we ought of right to be preferred before them. But what will Liscideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly bounded by those laws, for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will allege Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his discourse of the three unities; *Il est facile aux speculatifs d'être severes*, etc. "It is easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when by experience they had known how much we are limited and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the stage they banished from it." To illustrate a little what he has said: by their servile observations of the unities of time and place, and integrity of scenes, they have brought on themselves that dearth of plot, and narrowness of imagination, which may be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful accidents might naturally happen in two or three days, which cannot arrive with any probability in the compass of twenty four hours? There is time to be allowed also for maturity of de-

sign, which amongst great and prudent persons, such as are often represented in tragedy, cannot, with any likelihood of truth, be brought to pass at so short a warning. Farther, by tying themselves strictly to the unity of place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some business which cannot be shewn where the act began; but might, if the scene were interrupted, and the stage cleared for the persons to enter in another place; and therefore, the French poets are often forced upon absurdities: for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they are not to be shewn that act; and sometimes their characters are very unsuited to appear there: as suppose it were the king's bed-chamber, yet the meanest man in the tragedy must come and dispatch his business there, rather than in the lobby or court-yard, (which is fitter for him) for fear the stage should be cleared, and the scenes broken. Many times they fall by it into a greater inconvenience: for they keep their scenes unbroken, and yet change the place; as in one of their newest plays, where the act begins in the street. There a gentleman is to meet his friend: he sees him with his man coming out from his father's house: they talk together, and the first goes out: the second, who is a lover, has made an appointment with his mistress: she appears at the window, and then we are to imagine the scene lies under it. This gentleman is called away, and leaves his servant with his mistress: presently her father is heard from within; the young lady is afraid the serving-man should be discovered, and thrusts him into a place of safety, which is supposed to be her closet. After this, the father enters to the daughter, and now the scene is in a house:

for he is seeking from one room to another for this poor Philipin, or French Diego, who is heard from within, drolling and bawling many a miserable conceit on the subject of his bad condition. In this ridiculous manner the play goes forward, the stage being never empty all the while: To shut the street, the window, the two houses, and the closet, are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still. Now what I beseech you is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakspeare? who so should ought even their very laws they contain themselves, as Corneille did, with some last design, which like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed: such plots we can make every way regular so easily as they: but whenever they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counter-turns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been late in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they co-
 ter it more speedily. Hence the reason is perspicuous, why no French plays, when translated, have, or ever can succeed on the English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety: if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit: and therefore, it is a strange mistake in those who deary the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French. We have borrowed nothing from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakspeare and Fletcher: the copiousness and well-knitting of the intrigues we have from Johnson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays: (not to name our old comedies before Shake-

spear, which were all writ in verse of six feet, of Alexandrines; such as the French now use) I can shew, in Shakespear, many scenes of rhyme together, and the like in Ben Johnson's tragedies; in *Catiline*, and *Sejanus*, sometimes thirty or forty lines: I mean, besides the chorus, or the monologues; which by the way, shew'd Ben no enemy to this way of writing, especially if you read his *Sad Shepherd*, which goes sometimes on rhyme, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of the *Faithful Shepherds*; which is for the most part rhyme, thought not reduced to that purity to which it hath since been brought: and these examples are enough to clear us from a servile imitation of the French.

But to return whence I have digress'd, I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama: First, That we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs; and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters: And secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespear or Fletcher, (for Ben Johnson's are for the most part regular) there is a more masculine fancy, and greater spirit in the writing, than there is in any of the French. I could produce even in Shakespear's, and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *the Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *the Scornful Lady*: But, because (generally speaking) Shakespear, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet thro' carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Johnson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies, I shall select *the silent woman*: of which I will make a short examen, accord-

cording to those rules which the French observe.

As Neander was beginning to examine *the silent woman*; Eugenius, earnestly regarding him, I beseech you, Neander, said he, gratify the company, and me in particular, so far as, before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him?

I fear, replied Neander, That in obeying your commands, I shall draw some envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespear and Fletcher, his rivals in poesie; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.

To begin then with Shakespear: he was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those, who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say, he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, and insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets.

Quantum sentis solent inter viduena cupressi.

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Easton say, That there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better done in Shakespear; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Johnson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last king's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespear far above him.

Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am now to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespear's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study. Beaumont especially, being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Johnson while he lived submitted all his writings to his censure, and, it is thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving all his plots. What value he had for him appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore, need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem, was their *Philaster*; for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully: as the like is reported of Ben Johnson, before he writ *every man in his humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespear's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Johnson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest

perfection; what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespear's or Johnson's: The reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all mens humours. Shakespear's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Johnson's wit comes short of theirs.

As for Johnson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself, (for his best plays were but his *songes*) I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times, whom he has not translated in *Sejanes* and *Caillat*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch,

and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers, he so represents old Rome to us in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, it was, that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: Perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespear, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespear the greater wit. Shakespear was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespear. To conclude of him, as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his Discoveries, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any where with the French can furnish us.

Having thus spoken of the author, I proceed to the examination of his comedy, *The Silent Woman*.

Examen of the Silent Woman.

To begin first with the length of the action; it is so far from exceeding the compass of a natural day, that it takes not up an artificial one. It is all included in the limits of three hours and an half, which is no more than is required for the presentment on the stage. A beauty perhaps not much observed; if it had, we should not have looked on the Spanish translation of five hours with so much wonder. The scene

of it is laid in London; the latitude of place is almost as little as you can imagine: for it lies all within the compass of two houses, and after the first act, in one. The continuity of scenes is observed more than in any of our plays, except his own *Fox and Alchymist*. They are not broken above twice, or thrice at most, in the whole comedy; and in the two best of Corneille's plays, the *Cid* and *Cinna*, they are interrupted once. The action of the play is intirely one; the end or aim of which is the settling Morose's estate on Dauphine. The intrigue of it is the greatest and most noble of any pure unmixed comedy in any language: you see it in many persons of various characters and humours, and all delightful: As first, Morose, or an old man, to whom all noise, but his own talking, is offensive. Some, who would be thought critics, say this humour of his is forced: but to remove that objection, we may consider him, first, to be naturally of a delicate hearing, as many are to whom all sharp sounds are unpleasant; and secondly, we may attribute much of it to the peevishness of his age, or the wayward authority of an old man in his own house, where he may make himself obeyed; and to this the poet seems to allude in his name Morose. Besides this, I am assured from divers persons, that Ben Johnson was actually acquainted with such a man, one altogether as ridiculous as he is here represented. Others say, it is not enough to find one man of such an humour; it must be common to more, and the more common the more natural. To prove this, they instance in the best of comical characters, *Palstaff*: there are many men resembling him; old, fat, merry, cowardly, drunken, amorous, vain and lying. But to convince these people, I need but tell them, that humour is the ridiculous extravagance of conversation;

wherein one man differs from all others. If then it be common, or communicated to many, how differs it from other mens? Or what indeed causes it to be ridiculous so much as the singularity of it? As for Falstaff, he is not properly one humour, but a miscellany of humours or images, drawn from so many several men: that whereas he is singular, is his wit, or those things he says, *præter expectatum*, unexpected by the audience; his quick evasions when you imagine him surpris'd, which as they are extremely diverting of themselves, so receive a great addition from his person; for the very sight of such an unwieldy old debauched fellow is a comedy alone. And here, having a place so proper for it, I cannot but enlarge somewhat upon this subject of humour into which I am fallen. The ancients have little of it in their comedies: for the *γέννησις* of the old comedy, of which Aristophanes was chief, was not so much to imitate a man, as to make the people laugh at some odd conceit, which had commonly somewhat of unnatural or obscene in it. Thus, when you see Socrates brought upon the stage, you are not to imagine him made ridiculous by the imitation of his actions, but rather by making him perform something very unlike himself: something so childish and absurd, as by comparing it with the gravity of the true Socrates, makes a ridiculous object for the spectators. In their new comedy which succeeded, the poets sought indeed to express the *εἶδος*, as in their tragedies the *εἶδος* of mankind. But this *εἶδος* contained only the general characters of men and manners; as old men, lovers, serving-men, courtizans, parasites, and such other persons as we see in their comedies, all which they made alike: That is, one old man, or father, one lover, one courtizan so like another, as if the first of them had begot the

rest of every sort: *Ex homine hunc narrant dicat*. The
 custom they observed likewise in their tragedies,
 As for the French, though they have the word *hu-
 mour* among them, yet they have small use of it in
 their comedies, or farces; they being but ill imitati-
 ons of the *ridicule*, or that which stirred up laugh-
 ter in the old comedy. But among the English it is
 otherwise: Where by humour is meant some exa-
 vagant habit, passion, or affection, particular (as I
 said before) to some one person: by the oddness of
 which he is immediately distinguished from the rest
 of men; which being lively and naturally represent-
 ed, most frequently begets that malicious pleasure in
 the audience which is excited by laughter: as all
 things which are deviations from customs are ever
 the aptest to produce it: though by the way this
 laughter is only accidental, as the person represent-
 ed is fantastic or bizarre; but pleasure is essential to
 it; as the imitation of what is natural. The descri-
 ption of these humours, drawn from the knowledge
 and observation of particular persons, was the pecu-
 liar genius and talent of Ben Jonson; to whose play
 I now return. In short and summary of the play
 Besides Morose, there are at least, nine or ten dif-
 ferent characters and humours in the Silent Woman,
 all which persons have several concerns of their
 own; yet all used by the poet, to the conducting of
 the main design to perfection. I shall not waste time
 in commending the writing of this play, but I will
 give you my opinion; that there is more wit and ac-
 cuteness of fancy in it than in any of Ben Jonson's.
 Besides, that he has here described the conversation
 of gentlemen in the persons of True Wit, and his
 friends, with more gaiety, air, and freedom, than
 in the rest of his comedies. For the contrivance of
 the plot, it is extreme elaborate, and yet withal

easy; for the *know*, or *unseeing* it, it is so admirable, that when it is done, no one of the audience would think the poet could have missed it; and yet it was concealed so much before the last scene, that any other way would sooner have entered into your thoughts. But I dare not take upon me to commend the fabric of it, because it is altogether so full of art, that I must unravel every scene in it to commend it as I ought. And this excellent contrivance is still the more to be admired, because it is comedy, where the persons are only of common rank, and their business private, not elevated by passions or high concerns, as in serious plays. Here every one is a proper judge of all he sees; nothing is represented but that with which he daily converses: so that by consequence all faults lie open to discovery, and few are pardonable. It is this which Horace has judiciously observed:

*Credatur ex multis quæ res orceffat, habere
Doloris minimum; sed habet comœdiæ tanto
Plus horris, quanto veniæ minus.*

But our poet, who was not ignorant of these difficulties, has made use of all advantages; as he, who designs a large leap, takes his rise from the highest ground. One of these advantages, is that which Cornelle has laid down as the greatest which can arrive to any poet, and which himself could never compass above thrice in all his plays, viz. the making choice of some singular and long expected day, whereon the action of the play is to depend. This day was that designed by Dauphine, for the settling of his uncle's estate upon him, which to compass he contrives to marry him: that the marriage had been plotted by him long beforehand, is made evident, by what he tells Trac-wit in the second act,

that in one moment he had destroyed what he had been raising many months.

There is another artifice of the poet, which I cannot here omit, because by the frequent practice of it in his comedies, he has left it to us almost as a rule; that is, when he has any character or humour wherein he would shew a *coup de maitre*, or his highest skill; he recommends it to your observation, by a pleasant description of it before the person first appears. Thus, in Bartholomew-Fair, he gives you the pictures of Numps and Cokes, and in this, those of Daw, Lafoole, Morose, and the Collegiate Ladies; all which you hear described before you see them. So that before they come upon the stage, you have a longing expectation of them, which prepares you to receive them favourably; and when they are there, even from their first appearance you are so far acquainted with them, that nothing of their humour is lost to you.

I will observe yet one thing further of this admirable plot; the business of it rises in every act. The second is greater than the first; the third than the second, and so forward to the fifth. There too you see, till the very last scene, new difficulties arising to obstruct the action of the play; and when the audience is brought into despair that the business cannot naturally be effected; then, and not before, the discovery is made. But that the poet might entertain you with more variety all this while, he reserves some new characters to show you, which he opens not till the second and third act. In the second, Morose, Daw, the Barber and Otter; in the third, the Collegiate Ladies: all which he moves afterwards in by-walks, or under-plots, as diversions to the main design, lest it should grow tedious, though they are still naturally joined with it, and somewhere or other subservient to it. Thus, like a skilful chess-player,

by little and little, he draws out his men, and makes his pawns of use to his greater persons.

If this comedy, and some others of his, were translated into French prose, (which would now be no wonder to them, since Moliere has lately given them plays out of verse, which have not displeased them) I believe the controversy would soon be decided betwixt the two nations, even making them the judges. But we need not call our heroes to our aid; Be it spoken to the honour of the English, our nation can never want in any age such, who are able to dispute the empire of wit with any people in the universe. And though the fury of a civil war, and power, for twenty years together, abandoned to a barbarous race of men, enemies of all good learning, had buried the muses under the ruins of monarchy; yet with the restoration of our happiness, we see revived poesy lifting up its head, and already shaking off the rubbish which lay so heavy on it. We have seen since his majesty's return, many dramatic poems which yield not to those of any foreign nation, and which deserve all laurels but the English. I will set aside flattery and envy: it cannot be denied but we have some little blemish either in the plot or writing of all those plays which have been made within these seven years: (and perhaps there is no nation in the world so quick to discern them, or so difficult to pardon them, as ours:) yet if we can persuade ourselves to use the candour of that poet, who (though the most severe of critics) has left us this caution by which to moderate our censures;

*Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis;*

If in consideration of their many and great beau-

ties, we can wink at some slight and little imperfections; if we, I say, can be thus equal to ourselves, I ask, no favour from the French. And if I do not venture upon any particular judgment of our late plays, it is out of the consideration which an ancient writer gives me; *Vivorum ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis*: betwixt the extremes of admiration and malice, it is hard to judge upright of the living. Only I think it may be permitted me to say, that as it is no lessening to us to yield to some plays, and those not many of our own nation in the last age, so can it be no addition to pronounce of our present poets, that they have far surpassed all the ancients, and the modern writers of other contries.

This was the substance of what was then spoke on that occasion; and Lifideius, I think, was going to reply, when he was prevented thus by Crites: I am confident, said he, that the most material things that can be said have been already urged on either side; if they have not, I must beg of Lifideius that he will defer his answer till another time: for I confess I have a joint quarrel to you both, because you have concluded, without any reason given for it, that rhyme is proper for the stage. I will not dispute how ancient it hath been among us to write this way; perhaps our ancestors knew no better till Shakespear's time. I will grant it was not altogether left by him, and that Fletcher and Ben Johnson used it frequently in their pastorals; and sometimes in other plays. Farther, I will not argue whether we received it originally from our own country-men, or from the French; for that is an inquiry of as little benefit as theirs, who in the midst of the late plague were not so solicitous to provide against it, as to know whether we had it from the malignity of our own air, or by transportation from Holland. I have there-

fore only to affirm; That it is not allowable in serious plays; for comedies I find you already concluding with me. To prove this, I might satisfy myself to tell you, how much in vain it is for you to strive against the stream of the peoples inclination; the greatest part of which are prepossessed so much with those excellent plays of Shakespear, Fletcher, and Ben Johnson, (which have been written out of rhyme) that except you could bring them such as were written better in it, and those too by persons of equal reputation with them, it will be impossible for you to gain your cause with them, who will still be judges. This it is to which in fine all your reasons must submit. The unanimous consent of an audience is so powerful, that even Julius Caesar (as Macrobius reports of him) when he was perpetual dictator, was not able to balance it on the other side. But when Laberius, a Roman knight, at his request contended in the Mime with another poet, he was forced to cry out, *Etiam favente me victus es Laberi.* But I will not, on this occasion, take the advantage of the greater number, but only urge such reasons against rhyme, as I find in the writings of those who have urged for the other way. First then, I am of opinion, that rhyme is unnatural in a play, because dialogue there is presented as the effect of sudden thought. For a play is the imitation of nature, and since no man, without premeditation, speaks in rhyme, neither ought he to do it on the stage; this hinders not but the fancy may be there elevated to an higher pitch of thought than it is in ordinary discourse: for there is a probability that men of excellent and quick parts may speak noble things *extempore*; but those thoughts are never fettered with the numbers or sound of verse, without study; and therefore, it cannot be but unnatural to present the

most free way of speaking, in that which is the most constrained. For this reason, says Aristotle, It is best to write tragedy in that kind of verse which is the least such, or which is nearest prose: and this amongst the ancients was the iambique, and with us is blank verse, or the measure of verse kept exactly, without rhyme. These numbers therefore, are fittest for a play; the others for a paper of verses, or a poem; blank verse being as much below them, as rhyme is improper for the drama. And if it be objected, that neither are blank verses made *extempore*, yet as nearest nature, they are still to be preferred. But there are two particular exceptions which many besides myself have had to verse; by which it will appear yet more plainly, how improper it is in plays. And the first of them is grounded on that very reason for which some have commended rhyme: they say the quickness of repartees in argumentative scenes receives an ornament from verse. Now what is more unreasonable than to imagine, that a man should not only imagine the wit, but the rhyme too upon the sudden? This nicking of him who spoke before both in sound and measure, is so great an happiness, that you must at least suppose the persons of your play to be born poets, *Arcades omnes, et cantare pares et respondere parati*; they must have arrived to the degree of *quicquid conabar dicere*, to make verses almost whether they will or no: if they are any thing below this, it will look rather like the design of two, than the answer of one: it will appear that your actors hold intelligence together, that they perform their tricks like fortune-tellers, by confederacy. The hand of art will be too visible in it against that maxim of all professions: *Ars est celare artem*, That it is the greatest perfection of art to keep itself undiscovered. Nor will it serve you to object, that however you

manage it, it is still known to be a play: and consequently the dialogue of two persons understood to be the labour of one poet. For a play is still an imitation of nature; we know we are to be deceived, and we desire to be so; but no man ever was deceived but with a probability of truth; for who will suffer a gross lie to be fastened on him? Thus we sufficiently understand, that the scenes which represent cities and countries to us are not really such, but only painted on boards and canvass: but shall that excuse the ill painture or disfigurement of them? Nay, rather, ought they not to be laboured with so much the more diligence and exactness to help the imagination, since the mind of man does naturally tend to truth? and therefore, the nearer any thing comes to the imitation of it, the more it pleases.

Thus, you see, your rhyme is incapable of expressing the greatest thoughts naturally, and the lowest it cannot with any grace: for what is more unbefitting the majesty of verse, than to call a servant, or bid a door be shut in rhyme? And yet you are often forced on this miserable necessity. But verse, you say, circumscribes a quick and luxuriant fancy, which would extend itself too far on every subject, did not the labour which is required to well-turned and polished rhyme set bounds to it. Yet this argument, if granted, would only prove, that we may write better in verse, but not more naturally. Neither is it able to evince that; for he, who wants judgment to confine his fancy in blank verse, may want it as much in rhyme; and he who has it will avoid errors in both kinds. Latin verse was as great a confinement to the imagination of those poets, as rhyme to ours: and yet you find Ovid saying too much on every subject. *Nescivit* (says Seneca) *quod bene cess-*

fit relinquere: of which he gives you one famous instance in his description of the deluge.

Omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto.

"Now all was sea, nor had that sea a shore."

Thus Ovid's fancy was not limited by verse, and Virgil needed not verse to have bounded his.

In our own language we see Ben Johnson confining himself to what ought to be said, even in the liberty of blank verse; and yet Corneille, the most judicious of the French poets, is still varying the same sense an hundred ways, and dwelling eternally on the same subject, though confined by rhyme. Some other exceptions I have to verse; but since these I have named are for the most part already public, I conceive it reasonable they should first be answered.

It concerns me less than any, said Neander, (seeing he had ended) to reply to this discourse; because when I should have proved, that verse may be natural in plays, yet I should always be ready to confess, that those which I have written in this kind come short of that perfection which is required. Yet since you are pleased I should undertake this province, I will do it, though with all imaginable respect and deference, both to that person from whom you have borrowed your strongest arguments, and to whose judgment, when I have said all, I finally submit. But before I proceed to answer your objections, I must first remember you, that I exclude all comedy from my defence; and next, that I deny not but blank verse may be also used, and content myself only to assert, that in serious plays, where the subject and characters are great, and the plot unmixed with mirth, which might allay or divert these concerns which are produced, rhyme is there as natural, and more effectual than blank verse.

And now having laid down this as a foundation; to begin with Crites, I must crave leave to tell him, that some of his arguments against rhyme reach no farther than from the faults or defects of ill rhyme, to conclude against the use of it in general. May not I conclude against blank verse by the same reason? If the words of some poets who write in it are either ill chosen, or ill placed, (which makes not only rhyme, but all kind of verse in any language unnatural;) shall I, for their vicious affectation, condemn those excellent lines of Fletcher, which are written in that kind? Is there any thing in rhyme more constrained than this line in blank verse?

I heav'n invoke, and strong resistance make;

where you see both the clauses are placed unnaturally; that is, contrary to the common way of speaking, and that without the excuse of a rhyme to cause it: yet you would think me very ridiculous, if I should accuse the stubbornness of blank verse for this, and not rather the stiffness of the poet. Therefore, Crites, you must either prove that words, though well chosen, and duly placed, yet render not rhyme natural in itself; or that however natural and easy the rhyme may be, yet it is not proper for a play. If you insist on the former part, I would ask you what other conditions are required to make rhyme natural in itself, besides an election of apt words, and a right disposition of them? For the due choice of your words expresses your sense naturally, and the due placing them adapts the rhyme to it. If you object, that one verse may be made for the sake of another, though both the words and rhyme be apt: I answer, it cannot possibly so fall out; for either there is a dependence

of sense betwixt the first line and the second, or there is none: if there be that connection, then in the natural position of the words, the latter line must of necessity flow from the former: if there be no dependence, yet still the due ordering of words makes the last line as natural in itself as the other: so that the necessity of a rhyme never forces any but bad or lazy writers to say what they would not otherwise. It is true, there is both care and art required to write in verse; A good poet never establishes the first line, till he has sought out such a rhyme as may fit the sense, already prepared to heighten the second: many times the close of the sense falls into the middle of the next verse, or farther off, and he may often avail himself of the same advantages in English which Virgil had in Latin; he may break off in the Hemistich, and begin another line; indeed, the not observing these two last things makes plays, which are writ in verse, so tedious: for though, most commonly, the sense is to be confined to the couplet, yet nothing that does *perpetuo tenore fluere*, run in the same channel, can please always. It is like the murmuring of a stream, which not varying in the fall, causes at first attention, at last drowsiness. Variety of cadences is the best rule, the greatest help to the actors, and refreshment to the audience.

If then verse may be made natural in itself, how becomes it unnatural in a play? You say the stage is the representation of nature, and no man in ordinary conversation speaks in rhyme. But you foresaw, when you said this, that it might be answered; neither does any man speak in blank verse, or in measure without rhyme. Therefore, you concluded, that which is nearest nature is still to be preferred. But you took no notice, that rhyme might be made as natural as blank verse, by the well placing of the

words, *etc.* All the difference between them, when they are both correct, is the sound in one, which the other wants; and if so, the sweetness of it, and all the advantage resulting from it, which are handled in the preface to the *Rival Ladies*, will yet stand good. As for that place of Aristotle, where he says plays should be writ in that kind of verse which is nearest prose; it makes little for you, blank verse being properly but measured prose. Now measure alone in any modern language does not constitute verse; those of the ancients in Greek and Latin consisted in quantity of words, and a determinate number of feet. But when, by the inundation of the Goths and Vandals into Italy, new languages were introduced, and barbarously mingled with the Latin (of which the Italian, Spanish, French, and ours, made out of them and the Teutonic, are dialects;) a new way of poetry was practised; new, I say, in those countries; for in all probability it was that of the conquerors in their own nations: at least we are able to prove, that the eastern people have used it from all antiquity. This new way consisted in measure or number of feet and rhyme: The sweetness of rhyme, and observation of accent, supplying the place of quantity in words, which could neither exactly be observed by those Barbarians who knew not the rules of it; neither was it suitable to their tongues as it had been to the Greek and Latin. No man is tied in modern poetry to observe any farther rule in the feet of his verse, but that they be dissyllables; whether Spondee, Trochee, or Iambique, it matters not; only he is obliged to rhyme: neither do the Spanish, French, Italian, or Germans, acknowledge at all, or very rarely, any such kind of poetry as blank verse amongst them. There-

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* See Dan. his defence of rhyme.

fore at most, it is but a poetic prose, a *sermo pedestris*, and, as such, most fit for comedies, where I acknowledge rhyme to be improper. Farther, as to that quotation of Aristotle, our couplet verses may be rendered as near prose as blank verse itself, by using those advantages I lately named, as breaks in an hemistich, or running the sense into another line, thereby making art and order appear as loose and free as nature; or not tying ourselves to couplets strictly, we may use the benefit of the Pindaric way, practised in the Siege of Rhodes; where the numbers vary, and the rhyme is disposed carelessly, and far from often chyming. Neither is that other advantage of the ancients to be despised, of changing the kind of verse when they please, with the change of the scene, or some new entrance: for they confine not themselves always to Iambiques, but extend their liberty to all Lyrique numbers, and sometimes even to Hexameter. But I need not go so far to prove that rhyme, as it succeeds to all other offices of Greek and Latin verse, so especially to this of plays, since the custom of nations at this day confirms it; the French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies, are generally writ in it; and sure the universal consent of the most civilized parts of the world ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest.

But perhaps you may tell me I have proposed such a way to make rhyme natural, and consequently proper to plays, as is unpracticable, and that I shall scarce find six or eight lines together in any play, where the words are so placed and chosen as is required to make it natural. I answer, No poet need constrain himself at all times to it. It is enough, he makes it his general rule; for I deny not but sometimes there may be a greatness in placing the words

otherwise; and sometimes they may sound better, sometimes also the variety itself is excuse enough. But if, for the most part, the words be placed as they are in the negligence of prose, it is sufficient to denominate the way practicable; for we esteem that to be such, which in the trial oftner succeeds than misses. And thus far, you may find the practice made good in many plays; where you do not, remember still, that if you cannot find six natural rhymes together, it will be as hard for you to produce as many lines in blank verse, even among the greatest of our poets, against which I cannot make some reasonable exception.

And this, Sir, calls to my remembrance the beginning of your discourse, where you told us we should never find the audience favourable to this kind of writing, till we could produce as good plays in rhyme, as Ben Johnson, Fletcher, and Shakespear, had writ out of it. But it is to raise envy to the living, to compare them with the dead. They are honoured, and almost adored by us, as they deserve; neither do I know any so presumptuous of themselves as to contend with them. Yet give me leave to say thus much, without injury to their ashes, that not only we shall never equal them, but they could never equal themselves, were they to rise and write again. We acknowledge them our fathers in wit, but they have ruined their estates themselves before they came to their childrens hands. There is scarce an humour, a character, or any kind of plot, which they have not used. All comes sullied or wasted to us: and were they to entertain this age, they could not now make so plenteous treatments out of such decayed fortunes. This, therefore, will be a good argument to us either not to write at all, or to at-

tempt some other way. There is no bays to be expected in their walks; *Tentanda via est qua me quoque possim tollere humo*.

This way of writing in verse, they have only left free to us; our age is arrived to a perfection in it, which they never knew; and which (if we may guess by what of theirs we have seen in verse, as the Faithful Shepherdess, and Sad Shepherd) it is probable they never could have reached. For the genius of every age is different: and though ours excels in this, I deny not but that to imitate nature in that perfection which they did in prose, is a greater commendation than to write in verse exactly. As for what you have added, that the people are not generally inclined to like this way: if it were true, it would be no wonder, that betwixt the shaking off an old habit, and the introducing of a new, there should be difficulty. Do we not see them stick to Hopkins, and Sternhold's psalms, and forsake those of David, I mean Sandys's translation of them? If by the people, you understand the multitude, the of walla, it is no matter what they think; they are sometimes in the right, sometimes in the wrong: their judgment is a mere lottery. *Est ubi plebs recte putat, est ubi peccat*. Horace says it of the vulgar, judging poetry. But if you mean the mixed audience of the populace and the nobles, I dare confidently affirm, that a great part of the latter sort are already favourable to verse; and that no serious play, written since the king's return, have been more kindly received by them, than the Siege of Rhodes, the Mustapha, the Indian queen, and Indian emperor.

But I come now to the inference of your first argument. You said, that the dialogue of plays is presented as the effect of sudden thought, but no man speaks suddenly, or *extempore* in rhyme: and you

inferred from thence, that rhyme, which you acknowledge to be proper to epique poesy, cannot equally be proper to dramatic, unless we could suppose all men born so much more than poets, that verses should be made in them, not by them.

It has been formerly urged by you, and confessed by me, that since no man spoke any kind of verse *extempore*, that which was nearest nature was to be preferred. I answer you, therefore, by distinguishing betwixt what is nearest to the nature of comedy, which is the imitation of common persons and ordinary speaking, and what is nearest the nature of a serious play: this last, is indeed the representation of nature, but it is nature wrought up to a higher pitch. The plot, the characters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions, are all exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimilitude. Tragedy we know is wont to image to us the minds and fortunes of noble persons, and to portray these exactly; heroic rhyme is nearest nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse.

*Indignatur enim privatis, et prope socco
Dignis carminibus, narrari coena Thyestae,*
Says Horace; And in another place,
Effutire leves indigna tragoedia versus.

Blank verse is acknowledged to be too low for a poem; nay more, for a paper of verses; but if too low for an ordinary sonnet, how much more for tragedy! which is by Aristotle, in the dispute betwixt the epic poesy and the dramatic, for many reasons he there alleges, ranked above it.

But setting this defence aside, your argument is almost as strong against the use of rhyme in poems as

in plays; for the epic way is every where interlaced with dialogue, or discursive scenes; and therefore, you must either grant rhyme to be improper there, which is contrary to your assertion, or admit it into plays by the same title which you have given it to poems. For though tragedy be justly preferred above the other, yet there is a great affinity between them, as may easily be discovered in that definition of a play which Liscideius gave us. The genius of them is the same, a just and lively image of human nature, in its actions, passions, and traverses of fortune: so is the end, namely, for the delight and benefit of mankind. The characters and persons are still the same, *viz.* the greatest of both sorts, only the manner of acquainting us with those actions, passions and fortunes is different. Tragedy performs it *viva voce*, or by action, in dialogue; wherein it excels the epic poem, which does it chiefly by narration, and therefore, is not so lively an image of human nature. However, the argument betwixt them is such, that if rhyme be proper for one, it must be for the other. Verse, it is true, is not the effect of sudden thought: but this hinders not that sudden thought may be represented in verse, since those thoughts are such as must be higher than nature can raise them without premeditation, especially to a continuance of them, even out of verse, and consequently you cannot imagine them to have been sudden either in the poet, or the actors. A play, as I have said, to be like nature, is to be set above it; as statues which are placed on high are made greater than the life, that they may descend to the sight in their just proportion.

Perhaps I have insisted too long on this objection; but the clearing of it will make my stay shorter on the rest. You tell us, Crites, that rhyme appears most unnatural in repartees, or short replies: when

he who answers, (it being presumed, he knew not what the other would say, yet) makes up that part of the verse which was left incomplete, and supplies both the sound and measure of it. This, you say, looks rather like the confederacy of two, than the answer of one.

This, I confess, is an objection which is in every man's mouth who loves the rhyme: but suppose, I beseech you, the repartee were made only in blank verse, might not part of the same argument be turned against you? For the measure is as often supplied there as it is in rhyme; the latter half of the hemistich as commonly made up, or a second line subjoined, as a reply to the former; which any one leaf in Johnson's plays will sufficiently clear to you. You will often find in the Greek tragedians, and in Seneca, that when a scene grows up into the warmth of repartees, (which is the close fighting of it) the latter part of the Trimeter is supplied by him who answers; and yet it was never observed as a fault in them by any of the ancient or modern critics. The case is the same in our verse as it was in theirs; rhyme to us being in lieu of quantity to them. But if no latitude is to be allowed a poet, you take from him not only his licence of *quidlibet audendi*, but you tie him up in a straighter compass than you would a philosopher. This is indeed *musas colere severiores*; you would have him follow nature, but he must follow her on foot: you have dismounted him from his Pegasus. But you tell us, this supplying the last half of a verse, or adjoining a whole second to the former, looks more like the design of two, than the answer of one. Suppose we acknowledge it: how comes this confederacy to be more displeasing to you than in a dance which is well contrived? You see there

the united design of many persons to make up one figure: after they have separated themselves in many petty divisions, they rejoin one by one into a gross: the confederacy is plain amongst them; for chance could never produce any thing so beautiful, and yet there is nothing in it that shocks your sight: I acknowledge the hand of art appears in repartee, as of necessity it must in all kind of verse. But there is also the quick and pointant brevity of it (which is an high imitation of nature in those sudden gushes of passion) to mingle with it. And this, joined with the cadency and sweetness of the rhyme, leaves nothing in the soul of the hearer to desire. It is an art which appears; but it appears only like the shadowings of painture, which being to cause the rounding of it, cannot be absent: but while that is considered, they are lost: so while we attend to the other beauties of the matter, the care and labour of the rhyme is carried from us, or at least drowned in its own sweetness, as bees are sometimes buried in their honey. When a poet has found the repartee, the last perfection he can add to it, is, to put it into verse. However good the thought may be; however apt the words in which it is couched, yet he finds himself at a little unrest, while rhyme is wanting: he cannot leave it 'till that comes naturally, and then is at ease, and sits down contented.

From replies, which are the most elevated thoughts of verse, you pass to those which are most mean, and which are common with the lowest of household conversation. In these, you say, the majesty of verse suffers. You instance in the calling of a servant, or commanding a door to be shut, in rhyme. This, Crites, is a good observation of yours, but no argument: for it proves no more but that such thoughts

should be waved, as often as may be, by the address of the poet. But suppose they are necessary in the places where he uses them, yet there is no need to put them into rhyme. He may place them in the beginning of a verse, and break it off, as unfit, when so debased, for any other use: or granting the worst, that they require more room than the hemistich will allow, yet still there is a choice to be made of the best words, and least vulgar (provided they be apt) to express such thoughts. Many have blamed rhyme in general, for this fault, when the poet, with a little care, might have redressed it. But they do it with no more justice, than if English poetry should be made ridiculous for the sake of the water-poet's rhymes. Our language is noble, full, and significant; and I know not why he, who is master of it, may not clothe ordinary things in it as decently as the Latin; if he use the same diligence in his choice of words.

Delectus verborum origo est eloquentiae.

It was the saying of Julius Caesar, one so curious in his, that none of them can be changed but for a worse. One would think, *unlock the door*, was a thing as vulgar as could be spoken, and yet Seneca could make it sound high and lofty in his Latin.—

Referate clusos regii postes laris.

Set wide the palace gates.

But I turn from this exception, both because it happens not above twice or thrice in any play that these vulgar thoughts are used; and then too (were there no other apology to be made, yet) the necessity of them (which is alike in all like kind of writing) may excuse them. For if they are little and mean

in rhyme, they are of consequence such in blank verse. Besides, that the great eagerness, and precipitation, with which they are spoken, makes us rather mind the substance than the dress; that for which they are spoken, rather than what is spoke. For they are always the effect of some hasty concernment, and something of consequence depends on them.

Thus, Crites, I have endeavoured to answer your objections; it remains only that I should vindicate an argument for verse, which you have gone about to overthrow. It had formerly been said, that the easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant; but that the labour of rhyme bounds and circumscribes an over-fruitful fancy. The scene there being commonly confined to the couplet, and the words so ordered that the rhyme naturally follows them, not they the rhyme. To this you answered, That it was no argument to the question in hand, for the dispute was not which way a man may write best; but which is most proper for the subject on which he writes.

First, give me leave, Sir, to remember you, that the argument against which you raised this objection was only secondary: it was built on this hypothesis, that to write in verse was proper for serious plays. Which supposition being granted (as it was briefly made out in that discourse, by shewing how verse might be made natural) it asserted, that this way of writing was an help to the poet's judgment, by putting bounds to a wild over-flowing fancy. I think therefore, it will not be hard for me to make good what it was to prove on that supposition. But you add, that were this let pass, yet he who wants judgment in the liberty of his fancy, may as well shew the defect of it when he is confined to verse:

for he who has judgment will avoid errors; and he who has it not will commit them in all kinds of writing.

This argument, as you have taken it from a most acute person, so, I confess, it carries much weight in it. But by using the word judgment here indefinitely, you seem to have put a fallacy upon us: I grant he who has judgment, that is, so profound, so strong, or rather so infallible a judgment, that he needs no helps to keep it always poised and upright, will commit no faults either in rhyme or out of it. And on the other extreme, he who has a judgment so weak and crazed, that no helps can correct or amend it, shall write scurvily out of rhyme, and worse in it. But the first of these judgments is no where to be found, and the latter is not fit to write at all. To speak therefore of judgment as it is in the best poets: they, who have the greatest proportion of it, want other helps than from it within. As for example, you would be both to say, that he who is indued with a sound judgment has no need of history, geography, or moral philosophy, to write correctly. Judgment is indeed the master-workman in a play: but he requires many subordinate hands, many tools, to his assistance. And verse, I affirmed to be one of these: it is a rule and line by which he keeps his building compact and even, which otherwise lawless imagination would raise either irregularly or loosely. At least, if the poet commits errors with this help, he would make greater and more without it: It is (in short) a slow and painful, but the surest kind of working. Ovid, whom you accuse for luxuriancy in verse, had perhaps been farther guilty of it, had he writ in prose. And for your instance of Ben Johnson, who, you say, writ exactly without the help of rhyme; you are to remember, it is only an

aid to a luxuriant fancy, which his was not: as he did not want imagination, so none ever said he had much to spare. Neither was verse then refined so much, to be an help to that age, as it is to ours. Thus then the second thoughts being usually the best, as receiving the maturest digestion from judgment, and the last and most mature product of those thoughts being artful and laboured verse, it may well be inferred, that verse is a great help to a luxuriant fancy; and this is what that argument which you opposed, was to evince.

Neander was pursuing this discourse so eagerly, that Eugenius had called to him twice or thrice ere he took notice that the barge stood still, and that they were at the foot of Somerset-stairs, where they had appointed it to land. The company were all sorry to separate so soon, though a great part of the evening was already spent; and stood a-while looking back on the water, upon which the moon-beams played, and made it appear like floating quick-silver: at last, they went up through a croud of French people, who were merrily dancing in the open air, and nothing concerned for the noise of guns, which had alarmed the town that afternoon. Walking thence together to the Piazza, they parted there; Eugenius and Lisideius to some pleasant appointment they had made, and Crites and Neander to their several lodgings.

A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THE
ORIGINAL and PROGRESS
OF
SATIRE.*

Addressed to the EARL of DORSET.

* Prefixed originally to his translation of
Juvenal and Persius.

DISCOURS

CONCERNING THE

ORIGINAL AND PROGRESS



S. A. E.

Addressed to the Earl of Dorset.

Printed originally to his translation of
Juvenal and Persius.

To the right Honourable

CHARLES

Earl of DORSET and MIDDLESEX;

Lord chamberlain of his majesty's household,
knight of the most noble Order of the
 GARTER, etc.

MY LORD,

THE wishes and desires of all good men, which have attended your lordship from your first appearance in the world, are at length accomplished in your obtaining those honours and dignities, which you have so long deserved. There are no factions, though irreconcilable to one another, that are not united in their affection to you, and the respect they pay you. They are equally pleased in your prosperity, and would be equally concerned in your affliction. Titus Vespasian was not more the delight of human-kind. The universal empire made him only more known, and more powerful, but could not make him more beloved. He had greater ability of doing good, but your inclination to it is not less: and though you could not extend your beneficence to so many persons, yet

you have lost as few days as that excellent emperor; and never had his complaint to make when you went to bed, that the sun had shone upon you in vain, when you had the opportunity of relieving some unhappy man. This, my lord, has justly acquired you as many friends, as there are persons who have the honour to be known to you: mere acquaintance you have none; you have drawn them all into a nearer line: and they who have conversed with you, are for ever after inviolably yours. This is a truth so generally acknowledged, that it needs no proof: it is of the nature of a first principle, which is received as soon as it is proposed; and needs not the reformation which Des Cartes used to his: for we doubt not, neither can we properly say, we think we admire and love you, above all other men: there is a certainty in the proposition, and we know it. With the same assurance can I say, you neither have enemies, nor can scarce have any; for they who have never heard of you, can neither love or hate you; and they who have, can have no other notion of you, than that which they receive from the public, that you are the best of men. After this, my testimony can be of no farther use, than to declare it to be day-light at high-noon: and all who have the benefit of sight, can look up, as well, and see the sun.

It is true, I have one privilege which is almost particular to myself, that I saw you in the East as your first arising above the hemisphere: I was as soon sensible as any man of that light, when it was but just shooting out, and beginning to travel upward to the meridian. I made my early addresses to your lordship, in my Essay of Dramatic Poetry; and therein bespoke you to the world; wherein I have the right of a first discoverer. When I was myself,

in the rudiments of my poetry, without name or reputation in the world, having rather the ambition of a writer, than the skill; when I was drawing the out-lines of an art, without any living master to instruct me in it; an art which had been better praised than studied here in England, wherein Shakespear, who created the stage among us, had rather written happily, than knowingly and justly: and Johnson, who by studying Horace, had been acquainted with the rules, yet seemed to envy to posterity that knowledge, and like an inventor of some useful art, to make a monopoly of his learning: When thus, as I may say, before the use of the load-stone, or knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than the pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the French stage amongst the moderns, which are extremely different from ours, by reason of their opposite taste; yet even then, I had the presumption to dedicate to your lordship: A very unfinished piece, I must confess, and which only can be excused by the little experience of the author, and the modesty of the title, An Essay. Yet I was stronger in prophecy than I was in criticism; I was inspired to foretel you to mankind, as the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, the truest judge, and the best patron.

Good-sense and good-nature are never separated, though the ignorant world has thought otherwise. Good-nature, by which I mean beneficence and candor, is the product of right reason; which of necessity will give allowance to the failings of others, by considering that there is nothing perfect in mankind; and by distinguishing that which comes nearest to excellency, though not absolutely free from faults, will certainly produce a candor in the judge. It is incident to an elevated understanding, like your lord-

ship's, to find out the errors of other men: but it is your prerogative to pardon them; to look with pleasure on those things, which are somewhat congenial, and of a remote kindred to your own conceptions: and to forgive the many failings of those, who, with their wretched art, cannot arrive to those heights that you possess, from a happy, abundant, and native genius: which are as inborn to you, as they were to Shakespear; and for ought I know, to Homer; in either of whom we find all arts and sciences, all moral and natural philosophy, without knowing that they ever studied them.

There is not an English writer this day living, who is not perfectly convinced, that your lordship excels all others, in all the several parts of poetry which you have undertaken to adorn. The most vain, and the most ambitious of our age, have not dared to assume so much, as the competitors of Themistocles: they have yielded the first place without dispute; and have been arrogantly content to be esteemed as second to your lordship; and even that also with a *longo sed proximi intervallo*. If there have been, or are any, who go farther in their self-conceit, they must be very singular in their opinion: they must belike the Officer, in a play, who was called captain, lieutenant and company. The world will easily conclude, whether such unattended generals can ever be capable of making a revolution in Parnassus.

I will not attempt, in this place, to say any thing particular of your Lyric Poems, though they are the delight and wonder of this age, and will be the envy of the next. The subject of this book confines me to satire; and in that, as author of your own quality, (whose ashes I will not disturb,) has given you all the commendation, which his self-sufficiency could afford to any man:

The best good man, with the worst-natur'd muse.

In that character, methinks, I am reading Johnson's verses to the memory of Shakespear: an insolent, sparing, and invidious panegyric: where good-nature, the most godlike commendation of a man, is only attributed to your person, and denied to your writings: for they are every where so full of candor, that, like Horace, you only expose the follies of men, without arraigning their vices; and in this excel him, that you add that pointedness of thought, which is visibly wanting in our great Roman. There is more of salt in all your verses, than I have seen in any of the moderns, or even of the ancients: but you have been sparing of the gall; by which means you have pleased all readers, and offended none. Donne alone, of all our country-men, had your talent: but was not happy enough to arrive at your versification. And were he translated into numbers, and English, he would yet be wanting in the dignity of expression. That which is the prime virtue, and chief ornament of Virgil, which distinguishes him from the rest of writers, is so conspicuous in your verses, that it casts a shadow on all your contemporaries; we cannot be seen, or but obscurely, while you are present. You equal Donne in the variety, multiplicity, and choice, of thoughts; you excel him in the manner, and the words. I read you both, with the same admiration, but not with the same delight. He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love. In this (if I may be pardoned for so bold a truth) Mr. Cowley has copied him to a fault; so great a one,

in my opinion, that it throws his mistress infinitely below his Pindariques, and his latter compositions, which are undoubtedly the best of his poems, and the most correct. For my own part, I must avow it freely to the world, that I never attempted any thing in satire, wherein I have not studied your writings as the most perfect model. I have continually laid them before me; and the greatest commendation, which my own partiality can give to my productions, is, that they are copies, and no farther to be allowed, than as they have something more or less of the original. Some few touches of your lordship, some secret graces which I have endeavoured to express after your manner, have made whole poems of mine to pass with approbation: but take your verses altogether, and they are inimitable. If therefore, I have not written better, it is because you have not written more. You have not set me sufficient copy to transcribe; and I cannot add one letter of my own invention, of which I have not the example there.

It is a general complaint against your lordship, and I must have leave to upbraid you with it, that, because you need not write, you will not. Mankind that wishes you so well, in all things that relate to your prosperity, have their intervals of wishing for themselves, and are within a little of grudging you the fulness of your fortune: they would be more malicious if you used it not so well, and with so much generosity.

Fame is in itself a real good, if we may believe Cicero, who was perhaps too fond of it. But even fame, as Virgil tells us, acquires strength by going forward. Let Epicurus give indolence as an attribute to his gods, and place in it the happiness of the blessed: The divinity which we worship has given us not only a precept against it, but his own example to

the contrary. The world, my lord, would be content to allow you a seventh day for rest; or if you thought that hard upon you, we would not refuse you half your time. If you came out, like some great monarch, to take a town but once a year, as it were for your diversion, though you had no need to extend your territories: In short, if you were a bad, or, which is worse, an indifferent poet, we would thank you for our own quiet, and not expose you to the want of yours. But when you are so great and so successful, and when we have that necessity of your writing, that we cannot subsist intirely without it; any more (I may almost say) than the world without the daily course of ordinary providence, methinks, this argument might prevail with you, my lord, to forego a little of your repose for the public benefit. It is not that you are under any force of working daily miracles, to prove your being; but now and then somewhat of extraordinary, that is, any thing of your production, is requisite to refresh your character.

This, I think, my lord, is a sufficient reproach to you; and should I carry it as far as mankind would authorize me, would be little less than satire. And, indeed, a provocation is almost necessary, in behalf of the world, that you might be induced sometimes to write; and in relation to a multitude of scriblers, who daily pester the world with their insufferable stuff, that they might be discouraged from writing any more. I complain not of their lampoons and libels, though I have been the public mark for many years. I am vindictive enough to have repelled force by force, if I could imagine that any of them had ever reached me; but they either shot at rovers, and therefore missed, or their powder

was so weak, that I might safely stand them, at the nearest distance. I answered not the Rehearsal, because I knew the author sate to himself when he drew the picture, and was the very bays of his own farce. Because also I knew, that my betters were more concerned than I was in that satire: and, lastly, because Mr. Smith and Mr. Johnson, the main pillars of it, were two such languishing gentlemen in their conversation, that I could liken them to nothing but to their own relations, those noble characters of men of wit and pleasure about the town. The like considerations have hindered me from dealing with the lamentable companions of their prose and dog-grel; I am so far from defending my poetry against them, that I will not so much as expose theirs. And for my morals, if they are not proof against their attacks, let me be thought by posterity, what those authors would be thought, if any memory of them, or of their writings, could endure so long, as to another age. But these dull makers of lampoons, as harmless as they have been to me, are yet of dangerous example to the public: some witty men may perhaps succeed to their designs, and mixing sense with malice, blast the reputation of the most innocent amongst men, and the most virtuous amongst women.

Heaven be praised, our common libellers are as free from the imputation of wit, as of morality; and therefore, whatever mischief they have designed, they have performed but little of it. Yet these ill writers, in all justice, ought themselves to be exposed: as Persius has given us a fair example in his first satire; which is levelled particularly at them: and none is so fit to correct their faults, as he who is not only clear from any in his own writings, but also so just, that he will never defame the good; and is arm-

ed with the power of verse, to punish and make examples of the bad. But of this I shall have occasion to speak further, when I come to give the definition and character of true satires.

In the mean time, as a counsellor, bred up in the knowlege of the municipal and statute-laws, may honestly inform a just prince how far his prerogative extends; so I may be allowed to tell your lordship, who, by an undisputed title, are the king of poets, what an extent of power you have, and how lawfully you may exercise it, over the petulant scriblers of this age. As lord chamberlain, I know, you are absolute by your office, in all that belongs to the decency and good manners of the stage. You can banish from thence scurrility and profaneness, and restrain the licentious insolence of poets and their actors in all things that shock the public quiet, or the reputation of private persons; under the notion of Humour. But I mean not the authority, which is annexed to your office: I speak of that only which is inborn and inherent to your person; what is produced in you by an excellent wit, a masterly and commanding genius over all writers; whereby you are empowered, when you please, to give the final decision of wit; to put your stamp on all that ought to pass for current; and set a brand of reprobation on clipt poetry, and false coin. A shilling dipt in the Bath may go for gold amongst the ignorant, but the scepters on the guineas shew the difference. That your lordship is formed by nature for this supremacy, I could easily prove, (were it not already granted by the world) from the distinguishing character of your writing. Which is so visible to me, that I never could be imposed on to receive for yours, what was written by any others; or to mistake your

genuine poetry, for their spurious productions. I can farther add with truth (though not without some vanity in saying it) that in the same paper, written by divers hands, whereof your lordship's was only part, I could separate your gold from their copper: and though I could not give back to every author his own brass, (for there is not the same rule for distinguishing betwixt bad and bad, as betwixt ill and excellently good) yet I never failed of knowing what was yours, and what was not: and was absolutely certain, that this, or the other part, was positively yours, and could not possibly be written by any other.

True it is, that some bad poems, though not all, carry their owners marks about them. There is some peculiar awkwardness, false grammar, imperfect sense, or, at the least, obscurity; some brand or other on this bottoc, or that ear, that it is notorious who are the owners of the cattle, though they should not sign it with their names. But your lordship, on the contrary, is distinguished, not only by the excellency of your thoughts, but by your style and manner of expressing them. A painter, judging of some admirable piece, may affirm with certainty, that it was of Holben, or Vandike: but vulgar designs, and common draughts, are easily mistaken, and misapplied. Thus, by my long study of your lordship, I am arrived at the knowlege of your particular manner. In the good poems of other men, like those artists, I can only say, this is like the draught of such a one, or like the colouring of another. In short, I can only be sure, that it is the hand of a good master; but in your performances, it is scarcely possible for me to be deceived. If you write in your strength, you stand revealed at the first view; and should you write under it, you cannot a-

void some peculiar graces, which only cost me a second consideration to discover you: for I may say it with all the severity of truth, that every line of yours is precious. Your lordship's only fault is, that you have not written more; unless I could add another, and that yet greater, but I fear for the public, the accusation would not be true, that you have written, and out of vicious modesty will not publish.

Virgil has confined his works within the compass of eighteen thousand lines, and has not treated many subjects; yet he ever had, and ever will have, the reputation of the best poet. Martial says of him, that he could have excelled Varius in tragedy, and Horace in Lyric poetry, but out of deference to his friends, he attempted neither.

The same prevalence of genius is in your lordship, but the world cannot pardon your concealing it on the same consideration; because we have neither a living Varius, nor a Horace, in whose excellencies both of Poems, Odes, and Satires, you had equalled them, if our language had not yielded to the Roman majesty, and length of time had not added a reverence to the works of Horace. For good sense is the same in all or most ages; and course of time rather improves nature, than impairs her. What has been, may be again: Another Homer, and another Virgil, may possibly arise from those very causes which produced the first: though it would be impudence to affirm that any such have appeared.

It is manifest, that some particular ages have been more happy than others in the production of great men, in all sorts of arts and sciences: as that of Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and the rest, for stage poetry amongst the Greeks: that of Augustus for heroic, lyric, dramatic, elegiac, and indeed

all sorts of poetry, in the persons of Virgil, Horace, Varius, Ovid, and many others; especially if we take into that century the latter end of the commonwealth; wherein we find Varro, Lucretius, and Catullus: and at the same time lived Cicero, and Sallust, and Caesar. A famous age in modern times, for learning in every kind, was that of Lorenzo de Medici, and his son Leo X. wherein painting was revived, and poetry flourished, and the Greek language was restored:

Examples in all these are obvious: but what I would infer is this; That in such an age, it is possible some great genius may arise, to equal any of the ancients; abating only for the language. For great contemporaries whet and cultivate each other; and mutual borrowing, and commerce, makes the common riches of learning, as it does of the civil government.

But suppose that Homer and Virgil were the only of their species, and that nature was so much worn out in producing them, that she is never able to bear the like again; yet the example only holds in heroic poetry: in tragedy and satire I offer myself to maintain against some of our modern critics, that this age and the last, particularly in England, have excelled the ancients in both those kinds; and I would instance in Shakespear of the former, of your lordship in the latter sort.

Thus I might safely confine myself to my native country: but if I would only cross the seas, I might find in France a living Horace and a Juvenal, in the person of the admirable Boileau; whose numbers are excellent, whose expressions are noble, whose thoughts are just, whose language is pure, whose satire is pointed, and whose sense is close: what he borrows from the ancients, he repays with usury of

his own, in coin as good, and almost as universally valuable: for setting prejudice and partiality apart; though he is our enemy, the stamp of a Louis, the patron of all arts, is not much inferior to the medal of an Augustus Cæsar. Let this be said without entering into the interests of factions and parties, and relating only to the bounty of that king to men of learning and merit: a praise so just, that even we, who are his enemies, cannot refuse it to him.

Now if it may be permitted me to go back again to the consideration of epic poetry, I have confessed, that no man hitherto has reached, or so much as approached to the excellencies of Homer or of Virgil; I must farther add, that Statius, the best versificator next Virgil, knew not how to design after him; though he had the model in his eye; that Lucan is wanting both in design and subject; and is besides too full of heat and affectation; that among the moderns, Ariosto neither designed justly, nor observed any unity of action, nor compass of time, or moderation in the vastness of his draught: his style is luxurious, without majesty, or decency, and his adventures without the compass of nature and possibility: Tasso, whose design was regular, and who observed the rules of unity in time and place, more closely than Virgil, yet was not so happy in his action; he confesses himself to have been too lyrical, that is, to have written beneath the dignity of heroic verse, in his episodes of Sophronia, Erminia, and Armida; his story is not so pleasing as Ariosto's; he is too flatulent sometimes, and sometimes too dry; many times unequal, and almost always forced; and besides, is full of conceptions, points of epigram, and witticisms; all which are not only below the dignity of heroic verse, but contrary to its nature:

Virgil and Homer have not one of them. And those, who are guilty of so boyish an ambition in so grave a subject, are so far from being considered as heroic poets, that they ought to be turned down from Homer to the Anthologia, from Virgil to Martial and Owen's epigrams, and from Spenser to Flecno; that is, from the top to the bottom of all poetry. But to return to Tasso; he borrows from the invention of Boyardo, and in his alteration of his poem, which is infinitely the worse, imitates Homer so very servilely, that, for example, he gives the king of Jerusalem fifty sons, only because Homer had bestowed the like number on king Priam; he kills the youngest in the same manner, and has provided his hero with a Patroclus, under another name, only to bring him back to the wars, when his friend was killed. The French have performed nothing in this kind, which is not as below those two Italians, and subject to a thousand more reflections, without examining their St. Lewis, their Pucelle, or their Alarique: the English have only to boast of Spenser and Milton, who neither of them wanted either genius or learning, to have been perfect poets; and yet both of them are liable to many censures. For there is no uniformity in the design of Spenser: he aims at the accomplishment of no one action: he raises up a hero for every one of his adventures: and endows each of them with some particular moral virtue, which renders them all equal, without subordination or preference. Every one is most valiant in his own legend; only we must do them that justice to observe, that magnanimity, which is the character of prince Arthur, shines throughout the whole poem; and succours the rest, when they are in distress. The original of every knight was then living in the court of queen Elizabeth; and he attributed to each of

them, that virtue which he thought most conspicuous in them: an ingenious piece of flattery, though it turned not much to his account. Had he lived to finish his poem, in the six remaining legends, it had certainly been more of a piece; but could not have been perfect, because the model was not true. But prince Arthur, or his chief patron Sir Philip Sidney, whom he intended to make happy by the marriage of his Gloriana, dying before him, deprived the poet, both of means and spirit, to accomplish his design: for the rest, his obsolete language, and the ill choice of his stanza, are faults but of the second magnitude: for notwithstanding the first, he is still intelligible, at least after a little practice; and for the last, he is the more to be admired; that labouring under such a difficulty, his verses are so numerous, so various, and so harmonious, that only Virgil, whom he professedly imitated, has surpassed him, among the Romans; and only Mr. Waller among the English.

As for Mr. Milton, whom we all admire with so much justice, his subject is not that of an heroic poem, properly so called. His design is the losing of our happiness; his event is not prosperous, like that of all other epic works: his heavenly machines are many, and his human persons are but two. But I will not take Mr. Rhymer's work out of his hands: he has promised the world a critique on that author; wherein, though he will not allow his poem for heroic, I hope he will grant us, that his thoughts are elevated, his words sounding, and that no man has so happily copied the manner of Homer; or so copiously translated his Grecisms, and the Latin elegancies of Virgil. It is true, he runs into a flat thought, sometimes for a hundred lines together, but it is, when he is got into a track of scri-

pture: his antiquated words were his choice, not his necessity; for therein he imitated Spenser, as Spenser did Chaucer. And though, perhaps, the love of their masters may have transported both too far, in the frequent use of them; yet in my opinion, obsolete words may then be laudably revived, when either they are more sounding, or more significant than those in practice; and when their obscurity is taken away, by joining other words to them, which clear the sense; according to the rule of Horace, for the admission of new words. But in both cases, a moderation is to be observed in the use of them. For unnecessary coinage, as well as unnecessary revival, runs into affectation; a fault to be avoided on either hand. Neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse, though I may excuse him, by the example of Hannibal Caro, and other Italians, who have used it: for whatever causes he alleges for the abolishing of rhyme (which I have not now the leisure to examine) his own particular reason is plainly this, that rhyme was not his talent; he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it; which is manifest in his *Juvenilia*, or verses written in his youth; where his rhyme is always constrained and forced, and comes hardly from him, at an age when the soul is most pliant, and the passion of love makes almost every man a rhymers, though not a poet.

By this time, my lord, I doubt not but that you wonder, why I have run off from my biases so long together, and made so tedious a digression from satire to heroic poetry. But if you will not excuse it, by the tattling quality of age, which, as Sir William Davenant says, is always narrative; yet I hope the usefulness of what I have to say on this subject, will qualify the remoteness of it; and this is the last time I will commit the crime of prefaces, or trouble the

world with my notions of any thing that relates to verse. I have then, as you see, observed the failings of many great wits amongst the moderns, who have attempted to write an epic poem: besides these, or the like animadversions of them by other men, there is yet a farther reason given, why they cannot possibly succeed, so well as the ancients, even though we could allow them not to be inferiour, either in genius or learning, or the tongue in which they write, or all those other wonderful qualifications which are necessary to the forming of a true accomplished heroic poet. The fault is laid on our religion: they say that christianity is not capable of those embellishments which are afforded in the belief of those ancient heathens.

And it is true, that in the severe notions of our faith, the fortitude of a christian consists in patience and suffering, for the love of God, whatever hardships can befall in the world; not in any great attempts, or in performance of those enterprizes which the poets call heroic; and which are commonly the effects of interest, ostentation, pride, and worldly honour. That humility and resignation are our prime virtues; and that these include no action, but that of the soul: when as, on the contrary, an heroic poem requires, to its necessary design, and as its last perfection, some great action of war, the accomplishment of some extraordinary undertaking; which requires the strength and vigour of the body, the duty of a soldier, the capacity and prudence of a general; and, in short, as much, or more of the active virtue, than the suffering. But to this, the answer is very obvious. God has placed us in our several stations; the virtues of a private christian are patience, obedience, submission, and the like; but those of a magistrate, or general, or a king, are prudence,

counsel, active fortitude, coercive power, awful command, and the exercise of magnanimity, as well as justice. So that this objection hinders not, but that an epic poem, or the heroic action of some great commander, enterprized or the common good, and honour of the christian cause, and executed happily, may be as well written now, as it was of old by the heathens; provided the poet be endued with the same talents; and the language, though not of equal dignity, yet as near approaching to it, as our modern barbarism will allow, which is all that can be expected from our own or any other now extant, though more refined; and therefore, we are to rest contented with that only inferiority, which is not possibly to be remedied.

I wish I could as easily remove that other difficulty which yet remains. It is objected by a great French critic as well as an admirable poet, yet living, and whom I have mentioned with that honour which his merit exacts from me, I mean Boileau, That the machines of our christian religion in heroic poetry, are much more feeble to support that weight than those of heathenism. Their doctrine, grounded as it was on ridiculous fables, was yet the belief of the two victorious monarchies, the Grecian and Roman. Their gods did not only interest themselves in the event of wars (which is the effect of a superiour providence) but also espoused the several parties, in a visible corporeal descent, managed their intrigues, and fought their battles, sometimes in opposition to each other: Though Virgil (more discreet than Homer in that last particular) has contented himself with the partiality of his deities, their favours, their counsels or commands, to those whose cause they had espoused, without bringing them to the outrageousness of

blows. Now, our religion (says he) is deprived of the greatest part of those machines; at least the most shining in epic poetry. Though St. Michael in Ariosto seeks out Discord, to send her among the pagans, and finds her in a convent of friars, where peace should reign, which indeed is fine satire; and Satan in Tasso, excites Solyman to an attempt by night on the christian camp, and brings an host of devils to his assistance; yet the arch-angel, in the former example, when Discord was restive, and would not be drawn from her beloved monastery with fair words, has the whip-hand of her, drags her out with many stripes, sets her, on God's name, about her business; and makes her know the difference of strength betwixt a nuncio of heaven, and a minister of hell: the same angel, in the latter instance from Tasso, (as if God had never another messenger belonging to the court, but was confined like Jupiter to Mercury, and Juno to Iris,) when he sees his time, that is, when half of the christians are already killed, and all the rest are in a fair way of being routed, stickles betwixt the remainders of God's host, and the race of fiends; pulls the devils backwards by the tails, and drives them from their quarry; or otherwise the whole business had miscarried, and Jerusalem remained untaken. This, says Boileau, is a very unequal match for the poor devils, who are sure to come by the worst of it in the combat: for nothing is more easy, than for an Almighty power to bring his old rebels to reason, when he pleases. Consequently, what pleasure, what entertainment can be raised from so pitiful a machine, where we see the success of the battle from the very beginning of it; unless that, as we are christians, we are glad that we have gotten God on our side, to maul our enemies, when we cannot do the work

ourselves? For if the poet had given the faithful more courage, which had cost him nothing, or at least had made them exceed the Turks in number, then he might have gained the victory for us christians, without interesting heaven in the quarrel; and that with as much ease, and as little credit to the conqueror, as when a party of 100 soldiers defeats another which consists only of 50.

This, my lord, I confess, is such an argument against our modern poetry, as cannot be answered by those mediums which have been used. We cannot hitherto boast, that our religion has furnished us with any such machines, as have made the strength and beauty of the ancient buildings.

But what if I venture to advance an invention of my own, to supply the manifest defect of our new writers? I am sufficiently sensible of my weakness; and it is not very probable that I should succeed in such a project, whereof I have not had the least hint from any of my predecessors, the poets, or any of their seconds and coadjutors, the critics. Yet we see the art of war is improved in sieges, and new instruments of death are invented daily: something new in philosophy and the mechanics is discovered almost every year: and the science of former ages is improved by the succeeding. I will not detain you with a long preamble to that, which better judges will, perhaps, conclude to be little worth.

It is this, in short, That christian poets have not hitherto been acquainted with their own strength. If they had searched the Old Testament as they ought, they might there have found the machines which are proper for their work; and those more certain in their effect, than it may be the New Testament is, in the rules sufficient for salvation. The perusing of one chapter in the prophecy of Daniel, and ac-

commodating what there they find, with the principles of Platonic philosophy, as it is now christianized, would have the ministry of angels as strong an engine, for the working up heroic poetry, in our religion, as that of the ancients has been to raise theirs by all the fables of their gods, which were only received for truths by the most ignorant and weakest of the people.

It is a doctrine almost universally received by christians, as well protestants as catholics, That there are guardian angels appointed by God Almighty, as his vicegerents, for the protection and government of cities, provinces, kingdoms, and monarchies; and those as well of heathens, as of true believers. All this is so plainly proved from those texts of Daniel, that it admits of no farther controversy. The prince of the Persians, and that other of the Grecians, are granted to be the guardians and protecting ministers of those empires. It cannot be denied, that they were opposite, and resisted one another. St. Michael is mentioned by his name, as the patron of the Jews, and is now taken by the Christians, as the protector general of our religion. These tutelar Genii, who presided over the several people and regions committed to their charge, were watchful over them for good, as far as their commissions could possibly extend. The general purpose, and design of all, was certainly the service of their great Creator. But it is an undoubted truth, that for ends best known to the Almighty Majesty of heaven, his providential designs for the benefit of his creatures, for the debasing and punishing of some nations, and the exaltation and temporal reward of others, were not wholly known to these his ministers; else why those factious quarrels, controversies, and battles, amongst themselves, when they were all united in the same

design, the service and honour of their common master? But being instructed only in the general, and zealous of the main design; and as finite beings, not admitted into the secrets of government, the last resorts of providence, or capable of discovering the final purposes of God, who can work good out of evil, as he pleases; and irresistibly sways all manner of events on earth, directing them finally for the best, to his creation in general, and to the ultimate end of his own glory in particular: they must of necessity be sometimes ignorant of the means conducing to those ends, in which alone they can jar and oppose each other. One angel, as we may suppose the prince of Persia, as he is called, judging, that it would be more for God's honour and the benefit of his people, that the Median and Persian monarchy, which delivered them from the Babylonish captivity, should still be uppermost: and the patron of the Grecians, to whom the will of God might be more particularly revealed, contending on the other side, for the rise of Alexander and his successors, who were appointed to punish the backsliding Jews, and thereby to put them in mind of their offences, that they might repent, and become more virtuous, and more observant of the law revealed. But how far these controversies and appearing enmities of those glorious creatures may be carried; how these oppositions may best be managed, and by what means conducted, is not my business to shew or determine: These things must be left to the invention and judgment of the poet: if any of so happy a genius be now living, or any future age can produce a man, who being conversant in the philosophy of Plato, as it is now accommodated to christian use; for (as Virgil gives us to understand by his example) he is the only proper person, of all others for an epic po-

em, who to his natural endowments, of a large invention, a ripe judgment, and a strong memory, has joined the knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences, and particularly moral philosophy, the mathematics, geography and history, and with all these qualifications is born a poet; knows, and can practise the variety of numbers, and is master of the language in which he writes; if such a man, I say, be now arisen, or shall arise, I am vain enough to think, that I have proposed a model to him, by which he may build a nobler, a more beautiful, and more perfect poem, than any yet extant since the ancients.

There is another part of these machines yet wanting; but by what I have said, it would have been easily supplied by a judicious writer. He could not have failed to add the opposition of ill spirits to the good; they have also their design, ever opposite to that of heaven; and this alone has hitherto been the practice of the moderns: but this imperfect system, if I may call it such, which I have given, will infinitely advance and carry farther that hypothesis of the evil spirits contending with the good. For being so much weaker since their fall, than those blessed beings, they are yet supposed to have a permitted power of God, of acting ill, as from their own depraved nature; they have always the will of designing it. A great testimony of which we find in holy writ, when God Almighty suffered Satan to appear in the holy synod of the angels, (a thing not hitherto drawn into example by any of the poets) and also gave him power over all things belonging to his servant Job, excepting only life.

Now what these wicked spirits cannot compass, by the vast disproportion of their forces to those of the superior beings, they may by their fraud and cunning carry farther, in a seeming league, confede-

racy, or subserviency to the designs of some good angel, as far as conflicts with his purity, so suffer such an aid, the end of which may possibly be disguised, and concealed from his finite knowledge. This is indeed to suppose a great error in such a being: yet since a devil can appear like an angel of light; since craft and malice may sometimes blind for a while a more perfect understanding; and lastly, since Milton has given us an example of the like nature, when Satan appearing like a cherub to Uriel, the intelligence of the sun circumvented him, even in his own province, and passed only for a curious traveller through those new-created regions, that he might observe therein the workmanship of God, and praise him in his works.

I know not why, upon the same supposition, or some other, a fiend may not deceive a creature of more excellency than himself, but yet a creature; at least by the connivance, or tacit permission of the omniscient being.

Thus, my lord, I have, as briefly as I could, given your lordship, and by you the world, a rude draught of what I have been long labouring in my imagination. And what I have intended to have put in practice, (though far unable for the attempt of such a poem) and to have left the stage, to which my genius never much inclined me, for a work which would have taken up my life in the performance of it. This too I had intended chiefly for the honour of my native country, to which a poet is particularly obliged: of two subjects, both relating to it, I was doubtful, whether I should chuse that of king Arthur conquering the Saxons; which being farther distant in time, gives the greater scope to my invention: or that of Edward the black prince in subduing Spain, and restoring it to the lawful prince, though a great

tyrant, Don Pedro the cruel: which for the compass of time, including only the expedition of one year; for the greatness of the action, and its answerable event; for the magnanimity of the English hero, opposed to the ingratitude of the person whom he restored; and for the many beautiful episodes, which I had interwoven with the principal design, together with the characters of the chiefest English persons; wherein, after Virgil and Spenser, I would have taken occasion to represent my living friends and patrons of the noblest families, and also shadowed the events of future ages, in the succession of our imperial line: with these helps, and those of the machines, which I have mentioned; I might perhaps have done as well as some of my predecessors; or at least chalked out a way, for others to amend my errors in a like design. But being encouraged only with fair words by king Charles II. my little salary ill paid, and no prospect of a future subsistence, I was then discouraged in the beginning of my attempt; and now age has overtaken me; and want, a more insufferable evil, through the change of the times, has wholly disabled me. Though I must ever acknowledge, to the honour of your lordship, and the eternal memory of your charity, that since this revolution, wherein I have patiently suffered the ruin of my small fortune, and the loss of that poor subsistence which I had from two kings, whom I had served more faithfully than profitably to myself; then your lordship was pleased, out of no other motive but your own nobleness, without any desert of mine, or the least solicitation from me, to make me a most bountiful present, which at that time, when I was most in want of it, came most seasonably and unexpectedly to my relief. That favour, my lord, is of itself sufficient to bind any grateful man, to a perpetual ac-

knowledge, and to all the future service, which one of my mean condition can be ever able to perform. May the Almighty God return it for me, both in blessing you here, and rewarding you hereafter. I must not presume to defend the cause for which I now suffer, because your lordship is engaged against it: but the more you are so, the greater is my obligation to you: for your laying aside all the considerations of factions and parties, to do an action of pure disinterested charity. This is one amongst many of your shining qualities, which distinguish you from others of your rank: but let me add a farther truth, that without these ties of gratitude, and abstracting from them all, I have a most particular inclination to honour you; and, if it were not too bold an expression, to say, I love you. It is no shame to be a poet, though it is to be a bad one. Augustus Caesar of old, and cardinal Richlieu of late, would willingly have been such; and David and Solomon were such. You, who without flattery, are the best of the present age in England, and would have been so, had you been born in any other country, will receive more honour in future ages, by that one excellency, than by all those honours to which your birth has intitled you, or your merits have acquired you.

Ne, forte, pudori

Sit tibi musa lyrae solers, et cantor Apollo.

I have formerly said in this epistle, that I could distinguish your writings from those of any others: It is now time to clear myself from any imputation of self-conceit on that subject. I assume not to myself any particular lights in this discovery; they are such only as are obvious to every man of sense and judgment, who loves poetry, and understands it. Your thoughts are always so remote from the com-

mon way of thinking, that they are, as I may say, of another species, than the conceptions of other poets; yet you go not out of nature for any of them: gold is never bred upon the surface of the ground; but lies so hidden, and so deep, that the mines of it are seldom found; but the force of waters casts it out from the bowels of mountains, and exposes it amongst the sands of rivers: giving us of her bounty, what we could not hope for by our search. This success attends your lordship's thoughts, which would look like chance, if it were not perpetual, and always of the same tenour. If I grant that there is care in it, it is such a care as would be ineffectual and fruitless in other men. It is the *curiosa felicitas*, which Petronius ascribes to Horace in his Odes. We have not wherewithal to imagine so strongly, so justly, and so pleasantly: In short, if we have the same knowlege, we cannot draw out of it the same quintessence; we cannot give it such a term, such a propriety, and such a beauty: something is deficient in the manner, or the words, but more in the nobleness of our conception. Yet when you have finished all, and it appears in its full lustre, when the diamond is not only found, but the roughness smoothed, when it is cut into a form, and set in gold, then we cannot but acknowlege, that it is the perfect work of art and nature: and every one will be so vain, to think he himself could have performed the like, 'till he attempts it. It is just the description that Horace makes of such a finished piece: it appears so easy, *Ut sibi quisvis speret idem; sudet multum, frustra que laboret, ausus idem.* And besides all this, it is your lordship's particular talent to lay your thoughts so close together, that were they closer they would be crowded, and even a due connexion would be wanting. We are not kept in expectation

of two good lines, which are to come after a long parenthesis of twenty bad; which is the April-poetry of other writers, a mixture of rain and sun-shine by fits: you are always bright, even almost to a fault, by reason of the excess. There is continual abundance, a magazine of thought, and yet a perpetual variety of entertainment; which creates such an appetite in your reader, that he is not cloyed with any thing, but satisfied with all. It is that which the Romans call *coena dubia*; where there is such plenty, yet withal so much diversity, and so good order, that the choice is difficult betwixt one excellency and another; and yet the conclusion, by a due climax, is evermore the best; that is, as a conclusion ought to be, ever the most proper for its place. See, my lord, whether I have not studied your lordship with some application: and since you are so modest, that you will not be judge and party, I appeal to the whole world, if I have not drawn your picture to a great degree of likeness, though it is but in miniature; and that some of the best features are yet wanting. Yet what I have done, is enough to distinguish you from any other, which is the proposition that I took upon me to demonstrate.

And now, my lord, to apply what I have said to my present business; the satires of Juvenal and Persius, appearing in this new English dress, cannot so properly be inscribed to any man as to your lordship, who are the first of the age in that way of writing. Your lordship, amongst many other favours, has given me your permission for this address; and you have particularly encouraged me by your perusal and approbation of the Sixth and Tenth Satires of Juvenal, as I have translated them. My fellow-labourers have likewise commissioned me, to perform in their behalf this office of a dedication to you; and will ac-

knowledge, with all possible respect and gratitude, your acceptance of their work. Some of them have the honour to be known to your lordship already; and they, who have not yet that happiness, desire it now. Be pleased to receive our common endeavours with your wonted candour, without intitling you to the protection of our common failings, in so difficult an undertaking. And allow me your patience, if it be not already tired with this long epistle, to give you from the best authors, the origin, the antiquity, the growth, the change, and the compleatment of satire among the Romans. To describe, if not define, the nature of that poem, with its several qualifications and virtues, together with the several sorts of it. To compare the excellencies of Horace, Persius and Juvenal, and shew the particular manners of their satires. And lastly, to give an account of this new way of version which is attempted in our performance. All which, according to the weakness of my ability, and the best lights which I can get from others, shall be the subject of my following discourse.

The most perfect work of poetry, says our master Aristotle, is tragedy. His reason is, because it is the most united; being more severely confined within the rules of action, time, and place. The action is entire, of a piece, and one, without episodes: the time limited to a natural day; and the place circumscribed at least within the compass of one town, or city. Being exactly proportioned thus, and uniform in all its parts, the mind is more capable of comprehending the whole beauty of it without distraction.

But after all these advantages, an heroic poem is certainly the greatest work of human nature. The beauties and perfections of the other are but mecha-

nical; those of the epic are more noble. Though Homer has limited his place to Troy, and the fields about it; his action to forty eight natural days, whereof twelve are holy-days, or cessation from business, during the funerals of Patroclus. To proceed, the action of the epic is greater: the extension of time enlarges the pleasure of the reader, and the episodes give it more ornament, and more variety. The instruction is equal; but the first is only instructive, the latter forms a hero, and a prince.

If it signifies any thing which of them is of the more ancient family, the best and most absolute heroic poem was written by Homer long before tragedy was invented: but, if we consider the natural endowments, and acquired parts, which are necessary to make an accomplished writer in either kind, tragedy requires a less and more confined knowledge: moderate learning, and observation of the rules is sufficient, if a genius be not wanting. But in an epic poet, one who is worthy of that name, besides an universal genius, is required universal learning, together with all those qualities and acquisitions which I have named above, and as many more as I have through haste or negligence omitted. And after all, he must have exactly studied Homer and Virgil, as his patterns, Aristotle and Horace as his guides, and Vida and Bossu, as their commentators, with many others, both Italian and French critics, which I want leisure here to recommend.

In a word, What I have to say, in relation to this subject, which does not particularly concern satire, is, That the greatness of an heroic poem, beyond that of a tragedy, may easily be discovered, by observing how few have attempted that work, in comparison of those who have written dramas; and of those few, how small a number have succeeded. But

leaving the critics on either side, to contend about the preference due to this or that sort of poetry; I will hasten to my present business, which is the antiquity and origin of satire, according to those informations which I have received from the learned Casaubon, Heinsius, Rigaltius, Dacier, and the Dauphin's Juvenal; to which I shall add some observations of my own.

There has been a long dispute among the modern critics, whether the Romans derived their satire from the Grecians, or first invented it themselves. Julius Scaliger and Heinsius are of the first opinion; Casaubon, Rigaltius, Dacier, and the publisher of the Dauphin's Juvenal, maintain the latter. If we take satire in the general signification of the word, as it is used in all modern languages for an invective, it is certain that it is almost as old as verse; and tho' hymns, which are praises of God, may be allowed to have been before it, yet the defamation of others was not long after it. After God had cursed Adam and Eve in paradise, the husband and wife excused themselves, by laying the blame on one another; and gave a beginning to those conjugal dialogues in prose, which the poets have perfected in verse. The third chapter of Job is one of the first instances of this poem in holy scripture: unless we will take it higher, from the latter end of the second; where his wife advises him to curse his Maker.

This original, I confess, it not much to the honour of satire; but here it was nature, and that depraved: when it became an art, it bore better fruit. Only we have learnt thus much already, that scoffs and revilings are of the growth of all nations; and consequently that neither the Greek poets borrowed from other people their art of railing, neither need-

ed the Romans to take it from them. But considering satire as a species of poetry; here the war begins amongst the critics. Scaliger the father will have it descend from Greece to Rome; and derives the word satire, from Satyrus, that mixt kind of animal, or, as the ancients thought him, rural god, made up betwixt a man and a goat; with a human head, hooked nose, pouting lips, a bunch or struma under the chin, pricked ears, and upright horns; the body shagged with hair, especially from the waist, and ending in a goat, with the legs and feet of that creature. But Casaubon, and his followers, with reason, condemn this derivation; and prove that from Satyrus, the word Satira, as it signifies a poem, cannot possibly descend. For Satira is not properly a substantive, but an adjective; to which the word *Lanx*, in English a charger, or large platter, is understood: so that the Greek poem made according to the manner of a satire, and expressing his qualities, must properly be called satyrical, and not satire. And thus far it is allowed, that the Grecians had such poems; but that they were wholly different in specie, from that to which the Romans gave the name of satire.

Aristotle divides all poetry, in relation to the progress of it, into nature without art, art begun, and art completed. Mankind, even the most barbarous, have the seeds of poetry implanted in them. The first specimen of it was certainly shewn in the praises of the Deity, and prayers to him: and as they are of natural obligation, so they are likewise of divine institution. Which Milton observing, introduces Adam and Eve every morning adoring God in hymns and prayers. The first poetry was thus begun, in the wild notes of natural poetry, before the invention of feet and measures. The Gre-

cians and Romans had no other original of their poetry. Festivals and holy-days soon succeeded to private worship, and we need not doubt but they were enjoined by the true God to his own people; as they were afterwards imitated by the Heathens; who by the light of reason knew they were to invoke some superior being in their necessities, and to thank him for his benefits. Thus the Grecian holy-days were celebrated with offerings to Bacchus and Ceres, and other deities, to whose bounty they supposed they were owing for their corn and wine, and other helps of life. And the ancient Romans, Horace tells us, paid their thanks to mother Earth, or Vesta, to Silvanus, and their Genius, in the same manner. But as all festivals have a double reason of their institution; the first of religion, the other of recreation, for the unbending of our minds: so both the Grecians and Romans agreed, after their sacrifices were performed, to spend the remainder of the day in sports and merriments; amongst which, songs and dances, and that which they called wit (for want of knowing better) were the chiefest entertainments. The Grecians had a notion of Satyrs, whom I have already described; and taking them, and the Silent, that is, the young Satyrs and the old, for the tutors, attendants, and humble companions of their Bacchus, habited themselves like those rural deities, and imitated them in their rustic dances, to which they joined songs, with some sort of rude harmony, but without certain numbers; and to these they added a kind of Chorus.

The Romans also (as nature is the same in all places) though they knew nothing of those Grecian demi-gods, nor had any communication with Greece, yet had certain young men, who at their festivals

danced and sung after their uncouth manner, to a certain kind of verse, which they called Saturnian; what it was, we have no certain light from antiquity to discover; but we may conclude, that, like the Grecian, it was void of art, or at least with very feeble beginnings of it. Those ancient Romans, at these holy-days, which were a mixture of devotion and debauchery, had a custom of reproaching each other with their faults, in a sort of *extempore* poetry, or rather of tunable hobbling verse; and they answered in the same kind of gross raillery; their wit and their music being of a piece. The Grecians, says Casaubon, had formerly done the same, in the persons of their petulant Satyrs: but I am afraid he mistakes the matter, and confounds the singing and dancing of the Satyrs, with the rustical entertainments of the first Romans. The reason of my opinion is this; that Casaubon finding little light from antiquity, of these beginnings of poetry, amongst the Grecians, but only these representations of Satyrs, who carried canisters and cornucopias full of several fruits in their hands, and danced with them at their public feasts: and afterwards reading Horace, who makes mention of his homely Romans, jesting at one another in the same kind of solemnities, might suppose those wanton Satyrs did the same. And especially because Horace possibly might seem to him, to have shewn the original of all poetry in general, including the Grecians as well as Romans: though it is plainly otherwise, that he only described the beginning, and first rudiments of poetry in his own country. The verses are these, which he cites from the first epistle of the second book, which was written to Augustus.

*Agricolae prisci, sortes, parvoque beati,
Condita post frumenta, levantes tempore festo
Corpus et ipsum animum spe finis dura forentem,
Cum sociis operum pueris, et conjuge fida,
Tellurem porco, Silvanum lacte piabant,
Floribus et vino Genium memorem brevis aevi;
Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem
Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit.*

*Our brawny clowns of old, who turn'd the soil,
Content with little, and inur'd to toil,
At harvest home, with mirth and country-cheer
Restor'd their bodies for another year;
Refresh'd their spirits, and renew'd their hope
Of such a future feast, and future crop.
Then with their fellow-joggers of the ploughs,
Their little children, after their faithful spouse;
A sow they flew to Vesta's deity;
And kindly milk, Silvanus, pour'd to thee.
With flow'rs, and wine, their genius they ador'd;
A short life, and a merry, was the word.
From flowing cups defaming rhymes ensue,
And at each other homely taunts they threw.*

Yet since it is a hard conjecture, that so great a man as Casaubon should misapply what Horace writ concerning ancient Rome, to the ceremonies and manners of ancient Greece, I will not insist on this opinion, but rather judge in general, That since all poetry had its original from religion, that of the Grecians and Romans had the same beginning: both were invented at festivals of thanksgiving: and both were prosecuted with mirth and raillery, and rudiments of verse: amongst the Greeks, by those who represented Satyrs; and amongst the Romans, by real clowns. For, indeed, when I am reading Casaubon on these

two subjects, methinks I hear the same story told twice over with very little alteration. Of which Dacier taking notice, in his interpretation of the Latin verses which I have translated, says plainly, that the beginning of poetry was the same, with a small variety, in both countries; and that the mother of it, in all nations, was devotion. But what is yet more wonderful, that most learned critic takes notice also, in his illustrations on the first epistle of the second book, that as the poetry of the Romans, and that of the Grecians, had the same beginning, at feasts of thanksgiving, as it has been observed; and the old comedy of the Greeks which was investive, and the satire of the Romans which was of the same nature, were begun on the very same occasion, so the fortune of both in process of time was just the same; the old comedy of the Grecians was forbidden, for its too much licence in exposing of particular persons, and the rude satire of the Roman was also punished by a law of the Decemviri, as Horace tells us, in these words:

*Libertasque recurrentis accepta per annos
Lusit amabiliter, donec jam saevus apertam
In rabiem verti coepit focus; et per honestas
Ire domos impune minax: doluere cruento
Dente laceffiti; suis intactis quoque cura
Conditione super communi: quin etiam lex,
Poenaque lata, malo quae nollet carmine quemquam
Describi: vertere modum, formidine sustis
Ad bene dicendum delebandumque redacti.*

The law of the Decemviri was this; *Siquis occentassit malum carum, sive condidist, quod infamiam, faxit, flagitiumve alteri, capital esto.* A strange likeness, and barely possible: but the critics being all of

the same opinion, it becomes me to be silent, and to submit to better judgments than my own.

But to return to the Grecians, from whose satiric dramas, the elder Scaliger and Heinsius will have the Roman satire to proceed, I am to take a view of them first, and see if there be any such descent from them as those authors have pretended.

Thespis, or whosoever he were that invented tragedy, (for authors differ) mingled with them a chorus and dancers of Satyrs, which had before been used in the celebration of their festivals; and there they were ever afterwards retained. The character of them was also kept, which was mirth and wantonness: and this was given, I suppose, to the folly of the common audience, who soon grow weary of good sense; and as we daily see, in our own age, and country, are apt to forsake poetry, and still ready to return to buffoonry and farce. From hence it came, that in the Olympic Games, where the poets contended for four prizes, the satiric tragedy was the last of them; for in the rest, the Satyrs were excluded from the chorus. Among the plays of Euripides, which are yet remaining, there is one of these satirics, which is called the Cyclops; in which we may see the nature of those poems, and from thence conclude, what likeness they have to the Roman satire.

The story of this Cyclops, whose name was Polyphemus, so famous in the Grecian fables, was, That Ulysses, who with his company was driven on the coast of Sicily, where those Cyclops inhabited, coming to ask relief from Silenus, and the Satyrs, who were herdsmen to that one-eyed giant, was kindly received by them, and entertained; 'till being perceived by Polyphemus, they were made prisoners.

against the rites of hospitality, for which Ulysses eloquently pleaded, were afterwards put down in the den, and some of them devoured; after which, Ulysses having made him drunk, when he was asleep, thrust a great firebrand into his eye; and so revenging his dead followers, escaped with the remaining party of the living: and Silenus, and the Satyrs, were freed from their servitude under Polyphemus, and remitted to their first liberty of attending and accompanying their patron Bacchus.

This was the subject of the tragedy, which being one of those that end with a happy event, is therefore by Aristotle judged below the other sort, whose success is unfortunate. Notwithstanding which, the Satyrs, who were part of the *dramatis personae*, as well as the whole chorus, were properly introduced into the nature of the poem, which is mixed of farce and tragedy. The adventure of Ulysses was to entertain the judging part of the audience; and the uncouth persons of Silenus, and the Satyrs, to divert the common people with their gross railleries.

Your lordship has perceived, by this time, that this satiric tragedy, and the Roman satire, have little resemblances in any other features. The very kinds are different: for what has a pastoral tragedy to do with a paper of verses satirically written? The character and raillery of the Satyrs is the only thing that could pretend to a likeness; were Scaliger and Heinſius alive to maintain their opinion. And the first farces of the Romans, which were the rudiments of their poetry, were written before they had any communication with the Greeks; or indeed, any knowledge of that people.

And here it will be proper to give the definition of the Greek satiric poem from Casaubon, before I leave this subject. The satiric, says he, is a drama-

tic poem, annexed to a tragedy; having a chorus; which consists of Satyrs: the persons represented in it, are illustrious men: the action of it is great; the style is partly serious, and partly jocular; and the event of the action most commonly is happy.

The Grecians, besides these satiric tragedies, had another kind of poem, which they called Silli; which were more of kin to the Roman satire: those Silli were indeed invective poems, but of a different species from the Roman poems of Ennius, Pacuvius, Lucilius, Horace, and the rest of their successors. They were so called, says Casaubon in one place, from Silenus, the foster-father of Bacchus; but in another place, bethinking himself better, he derives their name *ἀπὸ τῆ σιλλαίνων*, from their scoffing and petulancy. From some fragments of the Silli, written by Timon, we may find, that they were satiric poems, full of parodies; that is, of verses patched up from great poets, and turned into another sense than their author intended them. Such among the Romans is the famous Cento of Ausonius; where the words are Virgil's: but by applying them to another sense, they are made the relation of a wedding-night; and the act of consummation fulsomely described in the very words of the most modest among all poets. Of the same manner are our songs; which are turned into burlesque, and the serious words of the author perverted into a ridiculous meaning. Thus in Timon's Silli the words are generally those of Homer, and the tragic poets; but he applies them satirically, to some customs and kinds of philosophy, which he arraigns. But the Romans not using any of these parodies in their satires; sometimes, indeed, repeating verses of other men, as Persius cites some of Nero's; but not turning them

into another meaning, the Silli cannot be supposed to be the original of Roman satire. To these Silli, consisting of parodies, we may properly add the satires which were written against particular persons; such as were the Iambiques of Archilochus against Lycambes, which Horace undoubtedly imitated in some of his odes and epodes, whose titles bear a sufficient witness of it: I might also name the investive of Ovid against Ibis: and many others: but these are the under-wood of satire, rather than the timber-trees: they are not a general extension, as reaching only to some individual person. And Horace seems to have purged himself from those splenetic reflexions in those odes and epodes, before he undertook the noble work of satires, which were properly so called. Thus, my lord, I have at length disengaged myself from those antiquities of Greece; and have proved, I hope, from the best critics, that the Roman satire was not borrowed from thence, but of their own manufacture: I am now almost gotten into my depth; at least by the help of Dacier I am swimming towards it. Not that I will promise always to follow him, any more than he follows Casaubon; but to keep him in my eye, as my best and truest guide; and where I think he may possibly mislead me, there to have recourse to my own lights, as I expect that others should do by me.

Quintilian says, in plain words, *Satira quidem tota nostra est*: and Horace had said the same thing before him, speaking of his predecessor in that sort of poetry,

— *et Graecis intacti carminis auctor.*

Nothing can be clearer than the opinion of the poet, and the orator, both the best critics of the two best ages of the Roman empire, than that satire was wholly of Latin growth; and not transplanted from Athens to Rome. Yet, as I have said, Scaliger the father, ac-

cording to his custom, that is, insolently enough, contradicts them both; and gives no better reason, than the derivation of Satyrus from *σαδου* Salacitas; and so from the lechery of these Fauns, thinks he has sufficiently proved, that satire is derived from them. As if wantonness and lubricity were essential to that sort of poem, which ought to be avoided in it. His other allegation, which I have already mentioned, is as pitiful: that the Satyrs carried platters and canisters full of fruit in their hands. If they had entered empty-handed, had they been ever the less Satyrs? Or were the fruits and flowers, which they offered, any thing of kin to satire? Or any argument that this poem was originally Grecian? Casaubon judged better, and his opinion is grounded on sure authority, that Satire was derived from *Satura*, a Roman word, which signifies full, and abundant, and full also of variety, in which nothing is wanting in its due perfection. It is thus, says Dacier, that we lay a full colour, when the wool has taken the whole tincture, and drunk in as much of the dye as it can receive. According to this derivation, from *Satur* comes *Satura*, or *Satira*, according to the new spelling; as *optimus* and *maximus* are now spelled *optimus* and *maximus*. *Satura*, as I have formerly noted, is an adjective, and relates to the word *Lanx*, which is understood. And this *Lanx*, in English a charger, or larger platter, was yearly filled with all sorts of fruits, which were offered to the gods at their festivals, as the premices, or first-gatherings. These offerings of several sorts thus mingled, it is true, were not unknown to the Grecians, who called them *συνταγμα* *δυσιας* a sacrifice of all sorts of fruits; and *συνταγμα*, when they offered all kinds of grain. Virgil has mentioned these sacrifices in his Georgics.

Lancibus et pandis fumantia reddimus exta.
And in another place,

— *Lancesque et liba feremus* :
That is, we offer the smoking entrails in great plat-
ters; and we will offer the chargers and the cakes.

This word *Satura* has been afterwards applied to many other sorts of mixtures; as *Festus* calls it a kind of *Olla*, or hotch-potch, made of several sorts of meats. Laws were also called *Leges Saturae*; when they were of several heads and titles; like our tacked bills of parliament. And *per saturam legem ferre*; in the Roman senate, was to carry a law without telling the senators, or counting voices, when they were in haste. *Sallust* uses the word *per saturam sententias exquirere*; when the majority was visibly on one side. From hence it might probably be conjectured, that the discourses or satires of *Ennius*, *Lucilius*, and *Horace*, as we now call them, took their name; because they are full of various matters, and are also written on various subjects, as *Porphyrus* says. But *Dacier* affirms, that it is not immediately from thence that these satires are so called: for that name had been used formerly for other things, which bore a nearer resemblance to those discourses of *Horace*. In explaining of which, (continues *Dacier*) a method is to be pursued, of which *Casaubon* himself has never thought, and which will put all things into so clear a light, that no farther room will be left for the least dispute.

During the space of almost four hundred years, since the building of their city, the Romans had never known any entertainments of the state: chance and jollity first found out those verses which they called *Saturnian*, and *Fescennine*: or rather human nature, which is inclined to poetry, first produced them, rude and barbarous, and unpolished, as all o-

ther operations of the soul are in their beginnings, before they are cultivated with art and study. However, in occasions of merriment they were first practised; and this rough-cast unhewn poetry, was instead of stage-plays, for the space of one hundred and twenty years together. They were made *extempore*, and were, as the French call them, *Impromptus*: for which the Tarsians of old were much renowned; and we see the daily examples of them in the Italian farces of Harlequin, and Scaramucha. Such was the poetry of that salvage people, before it was turned into numbers, and the harmony of verse. Little of the Saturnian verses is now remaining; we only know from authors, that they were nearer prose than poetry, without feet, or measure. They were ἑρπυθμοί but not ἰμμετροί: perhaps they might be used in the solemn part of their ceremonies; and the Fescennine, which were invented after them, in their afternoons debauchery, because they were scoffing and obscene.

The Fescennine and Saturnian were the same; for as they were called Saturnian from their ancientness, when Saturn reigned in Italy; they were also called Fescennine, from Fescennina, a town in the same country, where they were first practised. The actors, with a gross and rustic kind of raillery, reproached each other with their failings; and at the same time were nothing sparing of it to their audience. Somewhat of this custom was afterwards retained in their Saturnalia, or feasts of Saturn, celebrated in December; at least all kind of freedom in speech was then allowed to slaves, even against their masters; and we are not without some imitation of it in our Christmas Gambols. Soldiers also used those Fescennine verses, after measure and numbers had been added to them, at the triumph of their generals: of which we have an example, in the triumph of Julius Caesar.

over Gaul, in these expressions: *Caesar Gallias subegit, Nicomedes Caesarem: Ecce Caesar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Gallias; Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Caesarem.* The vapours of wine made the first satirical poets amongst the Romans; which, says Dacier, we cannot better represent, than by imagining a company of clowns on a holy-day, dancing lubberly, and upbraiding one another in *extempore* doggrel, with their defects and vices, and the stories that were told of them in bake-houses and barbers-shops.

When they began to be somewhat better bred, and were entering, as I may say, into the first rudiments of civil conversation, they left these hedge-notes, for another sort of poem, somewhat polished, which was also full of pleasant raillery, but without any mixture of obscenity. This sort of poetry appeared under the name of satire, because of its variety: and this satire was adorned with compositions of music, and with dances; but lascivious postures were banished from it. In the Tuscan language, says Livy, the word *Hister* signifies a player: and therefore, those actors, which were first brought from Etruria to Rome, on occasion of a pestilence; when the Romans were admonished to avert the anger of the gods by plays, in the year *ab urbe condita CCCXC*: those actors, I say, were therefore called *Histriones*: and that name has since remained, not only to actors Roman born, but to all others of every nation. They played not the former *extempore* stuff of Fescennine verses, or clownish jests; but what they acted was a kind of civil cleanly farce, with music and dances, and motions that were proper to the subject.

In this condition, Livius Andronicus found the stage, when he attempted first, instead of farces, to supply it with a nobler entertainment of tragedies

and comedies. This man was a Grecian born, and being made a slave by Livius Salinator, and brought to Rome, had the education of his patron's children committed to him. Which trust he discharged, so much to the satisfaction of his master, that he gave him his liberty.

Andronicus, thus become a freeman of Rome, added to his own name that of Livius his master; and, as I observed, was the first author of a regular play in that common-wealth. Being already instructed, in his native-country, in the manners and decencies of the Athenian theatre; and conversant in the Archæa Comoedia, or old comedy of Aristophanes, and the rest of the Grecian poets; he took from that model his own designing of plays for the Roman stage. The first of which was represented in the year CCCCXIV. since the building of Rome, as Tully, from the commentaries of Atticus, has assured us; it was after the end of the first Punic war, the year before Ennius was born. Dacier has not carried the matter altogether thus far; he only says, that one Livius Andronicus was the first stage-poet at Rome; but I will adventure, on this hint, to advance another proposition, which I hope the learned will approve. And though we have not any thing of Andronicus remaining to justify my conjecture, yet it is exceeding probable, that having read the works of those Grecian wits, his country-men, he imitated not only the ground-work, but also the manner of their writing. And how grave soever his tragedies might be, yet in his comedies he expressed the way of Aristophanes, Eupolis, and the rest, which was to call some persons by their own names, and to expose their defects to the laughter of the people. The examples of which we have in the fore-mentioned Aristophanes, who turned the wise Socrates into ridi-

cule; and is also very free with the management of Cleon, Alcibiades, and other ministers, of the Athenian government. Now if this be granted, we may easily suppose, that the first hint of satirical plays on the Roman stage was given by the Greeks. Not from the Satyrical, for that has been reasonably exploded in the former part of this discourse: but from their old comedy, which was imitated first by Livius Andronicus. And then Quintilian and Horace must be cautiously interpreted, where they affirm, that satire is wholly Roman; and a sort of verse, which was not touched on by the Grecians. The reconciliation of my opinion to the standard of their judgment, is not, however, very difficult, since they spake of satire, not as in its first elements, but as it was formed into a separate work; begun by Ennius, pursued by Lucilius, and completed afterwards by Horace. The proof depends only on this postulatium, that the comedies of Andronicus, which were imitations of the Greek, were also imitations of their raileries, and reflections on particular persons. For if this be granted me, which is a most probable supposition, it is easy to infer, that the first light which was given to the Roman theatrical satire, was from the plays of Livius Andronicus. Which will be more manifestly discovered, when I come to speak of Ennius. In the mean time I will return to Dacier.

The people, says he, ran in crouds to these new entertainments of Andronicus, as to pieces which were more noble in their kind, and more perfect than their former satires, which for some time they neglected and abandoned. But not long after, they took them up again, and then they joined them to their comedies: playing them at the end of every drama; as the French continue at this day to act

their farces; in the nature of a separate entertainment from their tragedies. But more particularly they were joined to the Attellane fables, says Casaubon; which were plays invented by the Osci. Those fables, says Valerius Maximus, out of Livy, were tempered with the Italian severity, and free from any note of infamy or obscenity; and as an old commentator on Juvenal affirms, the Exodiarii, which were singers and dancers, entered to entertain the people with light songs, and mimical gestures, that they might not go away oppressed with melancholy, from those serious pieces of the theatre. So that the ancient satire of the Romans was in extemporary reproaches; the next was farce, which was brought from Tuscany: to that succeeded the plays of Andronicus, from the old comedy of the Grecians: and out of all these, sprung two several branches of new Roman satire; like different cyons from the same root. Which I shall prove with as much brevity as the subject will allow.

A year after Andronicus had opened the Roman stage with his new dramas, Ennius was born; who, when he was grown to man's estate, having seriously considered the genius of the people, and how eagerly they followed the first satires, thought it would be worth his pains to refine upon the project, and to write satires, not to be acted on the theatre, but read. He preserved the ground-work of their pleasantries, their venom, and their raillery on particular persons, and general vices: and by this means, avoiding the danger of any ill success, in a public representation, he hoped to be as well received in the cabinet, as Andronicus had been upon the stage. The event was answerable to his expectation. He made discourses in several sorts of verse, varied often in the same paper; retaining still, in the title, their

original name of satire. Both in relation to the subjects, and the variety of matters contained in them, the satires of Horace are entirely like them; only Ennius, as I said, confines not himself to one sort of verse, as Horace does; but taking example from the Greeks, and even from Homer himself, in his *Margites*, which is a kind of satire, as Scaliger observes, gives himself the license, when one sort of numbers comes not easily, to run into another, as his fancy dictates. For he makes no difficulty to mingle hexameters with iambique trimeters; or with trochaïque tetrameters; as appears by those fragments which are yet remaining of him: Horace has thought him worthy to be copied; inserting many things of his into his own satires, as Virgil has done into his *Aeneid*.

Here we have Dacier making out that Ennius was the first satirist in that way of writing, which was of his invention; that is, satire abstracted from the stage, and new modelled into papers of verses, on several subjects. But he will have Ennius take the groundwork of satire from the first farces of the Romans; rather than from the formed plays of Livius Andronicus, which were copied from the Grecian comedies. It may possibly be so; but Dacier knows no more of it than I do. And it seems to me the more probable opinion, that he rather imitated the fine railleries of the Greeks, which he saw in the pieces of Andronicus, than the coarseness of his old country men, in their clownish extemporary way of jeering.

But besides this, it is universally granted, that Ennius, though an Italian, was excellently learned in the Greek language. His verses were stuffed with fragments of it, even to a fault: and he himself believed, according to the Pythagorean opinion, that the soul of Homer was transfused into him: which Perlius observes, in his Sixth Satire:

Postquam desertuit esse

Maconides,

But this being only the private opinion of so inconsiderable a man as I am, I leave it to the farther disquisition of the critics, if they think it worth their notice. Most evident it is, that whether he imitated the Roman farce, or the Greek comedies, he is to be acknowledged for the first author of Roman Satire, as it is properly so called, and distinguished from any sort of stage-plays.

Of Pacuvius, who succeeded him, there is little to be said, because there is so little remaining of him: only that he is taken to be the nephew of Ennius, his sister's son; that in probability he was instructed by his uncle, in his way of satire, which we are told he has copied; but what advances he made we know not.

Lucilius came into the world, when Pacuvius flourished most; he also made satires after the manner of Ennius, but he gave them a more graceful turn; and endeavoured to imitate more closely the *vetus comœdia* of the Greeks: of the which the old original Roman satire had no idea, till the time of Livius Andronicus. And though Horace seems to have made Lucilius the first author of satire in verse amongst the Romans, in these words,

Quid? cum est Lucilius ausus

Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem:

He is only thus to be understood, that Lucilius had given a more graceful turn to the satire of Ennius and Pacuvius; not that he invented a new satire of his own: and Quintilian seems to explain this passage of Horace in these words; *Satira quidem tota nostra est, in qua primus insignem laudem adeptus est Lucilius.*

Thus, both Horace and Quintilian give a kind of primacy of honour to Lucilius, amongst the Latin satirists. For as the Roman language grew more

refined, so much more capable it was of receiving the Grecian beauties in his time: Horace and Quintilian could mean no more, than that Lucilius writ better than Ennius and Pacuvius: and on the same account we prefer Horace to Lucilius: both of them imitated the old Greek comedy; and so did Ennius and Pacuvius before them. The polishing of the Latin tongue, in the succession of times, made the only difference. And Horace himself, in two of his satires, written purposely on this subject, thinks the Romans of his age were too partial in their commendations of Lucilius; who writ not only loosely, and muddily, with little art, and much less care, but also in a time when the Latin tongue was not yet sufficiently purged from the dregs of barbarism; and many significant and sounding words, which the Romans wanted, were not admitted even in the times of Lucretius and Cicero; of which both complain.

But to proceed, Dacier justly taxes Casaubon, saying, that the satires of Lucilius were wholly different in specie, from those of Ennius and Pacuvius. Casaubon was led into that mistake by Diomedes the grammarian, who in effect says this: satire among the Romans, but not among the Greeks, was a biting invective poem, made after the model of the ancient comedy; for the reprehension of vices: such as were the poems of Lucilius, of Horace, and of Persius. But in former times, the name of satire was given to poems, which were composed of several sorts of verses; such as were made by Ennius and Pacuvius; more fully expressing the etymology of the word Satire, from Satura, which we have observed. Here it is manifest, that Diomedes makes a specifical distinction betwixt the satires of Ennius and those of Lucilius. But this, as we say in English, is only a distinction without a difference; for the reason of

it is ridiculous, and absolutely false. This was that which cozened honest Casaubon, who, relying on Diomedes, had not sufficiently examined the origin and nature of those two satires; which were entirely the same, both in the matter and the form. For all that Lucilius performed beyond his predecessors, Ennius and Pacuvius, was only the adding of more politeness, and more salt; without any change in the substance of the poem: and though Lucilius put not together, in the same satire, several sorts of verses, as Ennius did; yet he composed several satires, of several sorts of verses; and mingled them with Greek verses: one poem consisted only of Hexameters; and another was entirely of Iambiques; a third of Trochaiques; as is visible by the fragments yet remaining of his works. In short, if the satires of Lucilius are therefore said to be wholly different from those of Ennius, because he added much more of beauty and polishing to his own poems, than are to be found in those before him; it will follow from hence, that the satires of Horace are wholly different from those of Lucilius, because Horace has not less surpassed Lucilius in the elegance of his writing, than Lucilius surpassed Ennius in the turn and ornament of his. This passage of Diomedes has also drawn Doussa, the son, into the same error of Casaubon, which I say, not to expose the little failings of those judicious men, but only to make it appear, with how much diffidence and caution we are to read their works; when they treat a subject of so much obscurity, and so very ancient, as is this of satire.

Having thus brought down the history of satire from its original to the times of Horace, and shewn the several changes of it: I should here discover some of those graces which Horace added to it, but that I think it will be more proper to defer that undertak-

ing, 'till I make the comparison betwixt him and Juvenal. In the mean while, following the order of time, it will be necessary to say somewhat of another kind of satire, which also was descended from the ancients: it is that which we call the Varronian satire, but which Varro himself calls the Menippean; because Varro, the most learned of the Romans, was the first author of it, who imitated, in his works, the manners of Menippus the Gadarenian, who professed the philosophy of the Cynics.

This sort of satire was not only composed of several sorts of verse, like those of Ennius, but was also mixed with prose; and Greek was sprinkled amongst the Latin. Quintilian, after he had spoken of the satire of Lucilius, adds what follows; *There is another and former kind of satire, composed by Terentius Varro, the most learned of the Romans: in which he was not satisfied alone with mingling in it several sorts of verse.* The only difficulty of this passage is, that Quintilian tells us, that this satire of Varro was of a former kind. For how can we possibly imagine this to be, since Varro, who was contemporary to Cicero, must consequently be after Lucilius? But Quintilian meant not, that the satire of Varro was in order of time before Lucilius; he would only give us to understand, that the Varronian satire, with mixture of several sorts of verses, was more after the manner of Ennius and Pacuvius, than that of Lucilius, who was more severe, and more correct; and gave himself less liberty in the mixture of his verses, in the same poem.

We have nothing remaining of those Varronian satires, excepting some inconsiderable fragments, and those for the most part much corrupted. The titles of many of them are indeed preserved, and they are generally double: from whence, at least, we may

understand, how many various subjects were treated by that author. Tully, in his *Academicks*, introduces Varro himself giving us some light concerning the scope and design of those works. Wherein, after he had shewn his reasons why he did not *ex professo* write of philosophy, he adds what follows. Notwithstanding, says he, that those pieces of mine, wherein I have imitated Menippus, though I have not translated him, are sprinkled with a kind of mirth and gaiety; yet many things are there inserted, which are drawn from the very intrails of philosophy, and many things severely argued: which I have mingled with pleasantries on purpose, that they may more easily go down with the common sort of unlearned readers. The rest of the sentence is so lame, that we can only make thus much out of it; that in the composition of his satires, he so tempered philology with philosophy, that his work was a mixture of them both. And Tully himself confirms us in this opinion; when a little after he addresses himself to Varro in these words. *And you yourself have composed a most elegant and complete poem; you have begun philosophy in many places: sufficient to incite us, though too little to instruct us.* Thus it appears, that Varro was one of those writers whom they called *συνειρητικοί*, studious of laughter; and that, as learned as he was, his business was more to divert his reader, than to teach him. And he intitled his own satires Menippean: not that Menippus had written any satires (for his were either dialogues or epistles) but that Varro imitated his style, his manner, his facetiousness. All that we know farther of Menippus, and his writings, which are wholly lost, is, that by some he is esteemed; as, among the rest, by Varro: by others he is noted of cynical impudence, and obscenity: that he was much given to those parodies,

which I have already mentioned; that is, he often quoted the verses of Homer and the tragic poets, and turned their serious meaning into something that was ridiculous; whereas Varro's satires are by Tully called absolute, and most elegant, and Various Poems. Lucian, who was emulous of this Menippus, seems to have imitated both his manners and his style in many of his dialogues; where Menippus himself is often introduced as a speaker in them, and as a perpetual buffoon: particularly his character is expressed in the beginning of that dialogue, which is called *Nuxuporia*. But Varro, in imitating him, avoids his impudence and filthiness, and only expresses his witty pleasantry.

This we may believe for certain, that as his subjects were various, so most of them were tales or stories of his own invention. Which is also manifest from antiquity, by those authors who are acknowledged to have written Varronian satires, in imitation of his: of whom the chief is Petronius Arbiter, whose satire, they say, is now printed in Holland, wholly recovered, and made complete: when it is made public, it will easily be seen by any one sentence, whether it be supposititious, or genuine. Many of Lucian's dialogues may also properly be called Varronian satires; particularly his *True History*: and consequently the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, which is taken from him. Of the same stamp is the mock Deification of Claudius, by Seneca: and the *Symposium* or *Caesars* of Julian the emperor. Amongst the moderns we may reckon the *Encomium Moriae* of Erasmus; Barclay's *Euphormio*, and a volume of German authors, which my ingenious friend Mr. Charles Killigrew once lent me. In the English I remember none, which are mixed with prose, as Varro's were: but of the same kind is mother Hubbard's tale

in Spenser; and (if it be not too vain to mention any thing of my own) the poems of Absalom and Mac Eleno.

This is what I have to say in general of satire: only as Dacier has observed before me, we may take notice, That the word Satire is of a more general signification in Latin, than in French, or English. For amongst the Romans it was not only used for those discourses which decry'd vice, or expos'd folly; but for others also, where virtue was recommended. But in our modern languages we apply it only to the invective poems, where the very name of satire is formidable to those persons, who would appear to the world, what they are not in themselves. For in English, to say satire, is to mean reflection, as we use that word in the worst sense; or as the French call it, more properly, *Medisance*. In the criticism of spelling, it ought to be with *i*, and not with *y*; to distinguish its true derivation from *Satura*, not from *Satyrus*. And if this be so, then it is false spelled throughout this book *; for here it is written satire. Which having not considered at the first, I thought it not worth correcting afterwards. But the French are more nice, and never spell it any other way than satire.

I am now arrived at the most difficult part of my undertaking, which is, to compare Horace with Juvenal and Persius. It is observed by Rigaltius, in his preface before Juvenal, written to Thuanus, that these three poets have all their particular partisans, and favourers: every commentator, as he has taken pains with any of them, thinks himself obliged to prefer his author to the other two; to find out their failings, and decry them, that he may make room for his own darling. Such is the partiality of man-

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* The spelling is rectified in this edition.

kind, to set up that interest which they have once espoused, though it be to the prejudice of truth, morality, and common justice; and especially in the productions of the brain. As authors generally think themselves the best poets, because they cannot go out of themselves to judge sincerely of their betters; so it is with critics, who, having first taken a liking to one of these poets, proceed to comment on him, and to illustrate him: after which, they fall in love with their own labours; to that degree of blind fondness, that at length they defend and exalt their author, not so much for his sake as for their own. It is a folly of the same nature, with that of the Romans themselves, in their games of the Circus; the spectators were divided in their factions, betwixt the Veneti and the Prasini: some were for the charioteer in blue, and some for him in green. The colours themselves were but a fancy; but when once a man had taken pains to set out those of his party, and had been at the trouble of procuring voices for them, the case was altered: he was concerned for his own labour; and that so earnestly, that disputes and quarrels, animosities, commotions, and bloodshed, often happened: and in the declension of the Grecian empire, the very sovereigns themselves engaged in it, even when the barbarians were at their doors; and stickled for the preference of colours, when the safety of their people was in question. I am now, myself, on the brink of the same precipice; I have spent some time on the translation of Juvenal and Persius; and it behoves me to be wary, lest, for that reason, I should be partial to them, or take a prejudice against Horace. Yet, on the other side, I would not be like some of our judges, who would give the cause for a poor man, right or wrong: for though that be an error on the better hand, yet it is

still a partiality; and a rich man, unheard, cannot be concluded an oppressor. I remember a saying of king Charles II. on Sir Matthew Hales, (who was doubtless an uncorrupt and upright man.) That his servants were sure to be cast on a trial, which was heard before him: not that he thought the judge was possible to be bribed; but that his integrity might be too scrupulous: and that the causes of the crown were always suspicious, when the privileges of subjects were concerned.

It had been much fairer, if the modern critics, who have embarked in the quarrels of their favourite authors, had rather given to each his proper due; without taking from another's heap, to raise their own. There is praise enough for each of them, in particular, without encroaching on his fellows, and detracting from them, or enriching themselves with the spoils of others. But to come to particulars: Heinſius and Dacier are the most principal of those, who raise Horace, above Juvenal and Persius. Scaliger the father, Rigaltius, and many others, debase Horace, that they may set up Juvenal: and Caſaubon, who is almost single, throws dirt on Juvenal and Horace, that he may exalt Persius, whom he understood particularly well, and better than any of the former commentators; even Stelluti, who succeeded him. I will begin with him, who, in my opinion, defends the weakest cause, which is that of Persius; and labouring, as Tacitus professes of his own writings, to divest myself of partiality, or prejudice, consider Persius, not as a poet whom I have wholly translated, and who has cost me more labour and time than Juvenal; but according to what I judge to be his own merit; which I think not equal,

in the main, to that of Juvenal or Horace; and yet in some things to be preferred to both of them.

First, then, for the verse, neither Casaubon himself, nor any for him, can defend either his numbers, or the purity of his Latin. Casaubon gives this point for lost; and pretends not to justify either the measures, or the words of Persius: he is evidently beneath Horace and Juvenal in both.

Then, as his verse is scabrous and hobbling, and his words not every where well chosen, the purity of Latin being more corrupted, than in the time of Juvenal, and consequently of Horace, who writ when the language was in the height of its perfection; so his diction is hard; his figures are generally too bold and daring; and his tropes, particularly his metaphors, insufferably strained.

In the third place, notwithstanding all the diligence of Casaubon, Stelluti, and a Scotch gentleman (whom I have heard extremely commended for his illustrations of him;) yet he is still obscure: whether he affected not to be understood, but with difficulty; or whether the fear of his safety, under Nero, compelled him to this darkness in some places; or that it was occasioned by his close way of thinking, and the brevity of his style, and crowding of his figures; or lastly, whether after so long a time, many of his words have been corrupted, and many customs, and stories, relating to them, lost to us; whether some of these reasons, or all, concurred to render him so cloudy; we may be bold to affirm, that the best of commentators can but guess at his meaning, in many passages: and none can be certain that he has divined rightly.

After all, he was a young man, like his friend and contemporary Lucan: both of them men of extraordinary parts, and great acquired knowlege, consider-

dering their youth. But neither of them had arrived to that maturity of judgment, which is necessary to the accomplishing of a formed poet. And this consideration, as on the one hand it lays some imperfections to their charge; so, on the other side, it is a candid excuse for those failings, which are incident to youth and inexperience; and we have more reason to wonder, how they, who died before the thirtieth year of their age, could write so well, and think so strongly; than to accuse them of those faults, from which human nature, and more especially in youth, can never possibly be exempted.

To consider Persius yet more closely: he rather insulted over vice and folly, than exposed them, like Juvenal and Horace. And as chaste and modest as he is esteemed, it cannot be denied, but that in some places he is broad and fulsome, as the latter verses of the fourth satire, and of the sixth, sufficiently witness. And it is to be believed, that he who commits the same crime often, and without necessity, cannot but do it with some kind of pleasure.

To come to a conclusion, he is manifestly below Horace; because he borrows most of his greatest beauties from him: and Casaubon is so far from denying this, that he has written a treatise purposely concerning it; wherein he shews a multitude of his translations from Horace, and his imitations of him, for the credit of his author, which he calls *Imitatio Horatiana*.

To these defects, which I casually observed, while I was translating this author, Scaliger has added others: he calls him, in plain terms, a silly writer, and a trifier; full of ostentation of learning; and after all, unworthy to come into competition with Juvenal and Horace.

After such terrible accusations, it is time to hear what his patron Casaubon can allege in his defence. Instead of answering, he excuses for the most part; and when he cannot, accuses others of the same crimes. He deals with Scaliger, as a modest scholar with a master. He compliments him with so much reverence, that one would swear he feared him as much at least as he respected him. Scaliger will not allow Persius to have any wit: Casaubon interprets this in the mildest sense; and confesses his author was not good at turning things into a pleasant ridicule; or in other words, that he was not a laughable writer. That he was *ineptus*, indeed, but that was *non aptissimus ad jocandum*. But that he was ostentations of his learning, that, by Scaliger's good favour, he denies. Persius shewed his learning, but was no boaster of it; he did *ostendere*, but not *ostentare*; and so, he says, did Scaliger: Where, methinks, Casaubon turns it handsomely upon that supercilious critic, and silently insinuates, that he himself was sufficiently vain-glorious, and a boaster of his own knowlege. All the writings of this venerable Gen-sor, continues Casaubon, which are χρυσὴ χρυσό-τερα more golden than gold itself, are every where smelling of thyme, which, like a bee, he has gathered from ancient authors: but far be ostentation and vain-glory from a gentleman, so well born, and so nobly educated as Scaliger. But, says Scaliger, he is so obscure, that he has got himself the name of Scotinus, a dark writer: Now, says Casaubon, it is a wonder to me that any thing could be obscure to the divine wit of Scaliger; from which nothing could be hidden. This is indeed a strong compliment, but no defence. And Casaubon, who could not but be sensible of his author's blind side, thinks it time to abandon a post that was untenable. He acknowledges

that Persius is obscure in some places : but so is Plato, so is Thucydides ; so are Pindar, Theocritus and Aristophanes, amongst the Greek poets ; and even Horace and Juvenal, he might have added, amongst the Romans. The truth is, Persius is not sometimes, but generally obscure ; and therefore Casaubon, at last, is forced to excuse him, by alleging that it was *se defendendo*, for fear of Nero ; and that he was commanded to write so cloudily by Cornutus, in virtue of holy obedience to his master. I cannot help my own opinion ; I think Cornutus needed not to have read many lectures to him on that subject. Persius was an apt scholar ; and when he was bidden to be obscure in some places, where his life and safety were in question, took the same counsel for all his book ; and never afterwards wrote ten lines together clearly. Casaubon, being upon this chapter, has not failed, we may be sure, of making a compliment to his own dear comment. If Persius, says he, be in himself obscure, yet my interpretation has made him intelligible. There is no question but he deserves that praise, which he has given to himself : but the nature of the thing, as Lucretius says, will not admit of a perfect explanation. Besides many examples which I could urge, the very last verse of his last satire, upon which he particularly values himself in his preface, is not yet sufficiently explicated. It is true, Holiday has endeavoured to justify his construction ; but Stelluti is against it : And, for my part, I can have but a very dark notion of it. As for the chastity of his thoughts, Casaubon denies not but that one particular passage, in the fourth satire, *At, si unctus cesses*, etc. is not only the most obscure, but the most obscene of all his works : I understood it ; but for that reason turned it over. In defence

of his boisterous metaphors, he quotes Longinus, who accounts them as instruments of the sublime; fit to move and stir up the affections, particularly in narration. To which it may be replied, That where the trope is far fetched, and hard, it is fit for nothing but to puzzle the understanding; and may be reckoned amongst those things of Demosthenes which Æschines called *δαύματα* not *ρήματα*, that is, prodigies, not words. It must be granted to Casaubon, that the knowledge of many things is lost in our modern ages, which were of familiar notice to the ancients; and that satire is a poem of a difficult nature in itself, and is not written to vulgar readers. And through the relation which it has to comedy, the frequent change of persons makes the sense perplexed; when we can but divine who it is that speaks; whether Persius himself, or his friend and monitor; or, in some places, a third person. But Casaubon comes back always to himself, and concludes, that if Persius had not been obscure, there had been no need of him for an interpreter. Yet when he had once enjoined himself so hard a task, he then considered the Greek proverb, that he must *γελῶντες φαγεῖν ἢ μὴ φαγεῖν* either eat the whole snail, or let it quite alone; and so he went through with his laborious task, as I have done with my difficult translation.

Thus far, my lord, you see it has gone very hard with Persius: I think he cannot be allowed to stand in competition, either with Juvenal or Horace. Yet, for once, I will venture to be so vain, as to affirm, That none of his hard metaphors, or forced expressions, are in my translation: but more of this in its proper place, where I shall say somewhat in particular of our general performance, in making these two authors English. In the mean time, I think my-

self obliged to give Persius his undoubted due, and to acquaint the world, with Casaubon, in what he has equalled, and in what excelled his two competitors.

A man who has resolved to praise an author, with any appearance of justice, must be sure to take him on the strongest side, and where he is least liable to exceptions. He is therefore obliged to chuse his mediums accordingly: Casaubon, who saw that Persius could not laugh with a becoming grace, that he was not made for jesting, and that a merry conceit was not his talent, turned his feather, like an Indian, to another light, that he might give it the better gloss. Moral doctrine, says he, and urbanity, or well-mannered wit, are the two things which constitute the Roman satire. But of the two, that which is most essential to this poem, and is, as it were, the very soul which animates it, is the scourging of vice, and exhortation to virtue. Thus wit, for a good reason, is already almost out of doors; and allowed only for an instrument, a kind of tool, or a weapon, as he calls it, of which the satirist makes use, in the compassing of his design. The end and aim of our three rivals, is consequently the same. But by what methods they have prosecuted their intention, is farther to be considered. Satire is of the nature of moral philosophy, as being instructive: He, therefore, who instructs most usefully, will carry the palm from his two antagonists. The philosophy in which Persius was educated, and which he professes through his whole book, is the Stoic: the most noble, most generous, most beneficial to human kind, amongst all the sects, who have given us the rules of ethics, thereby to form a severe virtue in the soul; to raise in us an undaunted courage, against the assaults of fortune; to esteem as nothing the things that are

without us, because they are not in our power; not to value riches, beauty, honours, fame, or health, any farther than as conveniencies; and so many helps to living as we ought, and doing good in our generation. In short, to be always happy, while we possess our minds with a good conscience, are free from the slavery of vices, and conform our actions and conversation to the rules of right reason. See here, my lord, an epitome of Epictetus; the doctrine of Zeno, and the education of our Persius. And this he expressed, not only in all his satires, but in the manner of his life. I will not lessen this commendation of the Stoic philosophy, by giving you an account of some absurdities in their doctrine, and some perhaps impieties, if we consider them by the standard of christian faith: Persius has fallen into none of them; and therefore is free from those imputations. What he teaches, might be taught from pulpits, with more profit to the audience, than all the nice speculations of divinity, and controversies concerning faith; which are more for the profit of the shepherd, than for the edification of the flock. Passion, interest, ambition, and all their bloody consequences of discord, and of war, are banished from this doctrine. Here is nothing proposed but the quiet and tranquillity of the mind; virtue lodged at home, and afterwards diffused in her general effects, to the improvement and good of human kind. And therefore, I wonder not that the present bishop of Salisbury has recommended this our author, and the tenth satire of Juvenal, in his pastoral letter, to the serious perusal and practice of the divines in his diocess, as the best common-places for their sermons, as the store-houses and magazines of moral virtues, from whence they may draw out, as they have occasion, all manner of assistance for the accomplish-

ment of a virtuous life, which the Stoics have assigned for the great end and perfection of mankind. Herein then it is, that Persius has excelled both Juvenal and Horace. He sticks to his own philosophy: he shifts not sides, like Horace, who is sometimes an Epicurean, sometimes a Stoic, sometimes an Eclectic; as his present humour leads him: nor declaims like Juvenal against vices, more like an orator, than a philosopher. Persius is every where the same; true to the dogmas of his master: what he has learnt, he teaches vehemently; and what he teaches, that he practises himself. There is a spirit of sincerity in all he says: you may easily discern that he is in earnest, and is persuaded of that truth which he inculcates. In this I am of opinion, that he excels Horace, who is commonly in jest, and laughs while he instructs: and is equal to Juvenal, who was as honest and serious as Persius, and more he could not be.

Hitherto I have followed Casaubon, and enlarged upon him; because I am satisfied that he says no more than truth; the rest is almost all frivolous. For he says that Horace being the son of a tax-gatherer, or a collector, as we call it, smells every where of the meanness of his birth and education: his conceits are vulgar, like the subjects of his satires; that he does *plebeium sapere*; and writes not with that elevation, which becomes a satirist: that Persius being nobly born, and of an opulent family, had likewise the advantage of a better master; Cornutus being the most learned of his time, a man of a most holy life, the chief of the Stoic sect at Rome; and not only a great philosopher, but a poet himself; and in probability a coadjutor of Persius. That, as for Juvenal, he was long a declaimer, came late to po-

etry, and had not been much conversant in philosophy.

It is granted, that the father of Horace was Libertinus, that is, one degree removed from his grandfather, who had been once a slave: but Horace, speaking of him, gives him the best character of a father, which I ever read in history; and I wish a witty friend of mine now living had such another. He bred him in the best school, and with the best company of young noblemen. And Horace, by his gratitude to his memory, gives a certain testimony that his education was ingenuous. After this, he formed himself abroad, by the conversation of great men. Brutus found him at Athens, and was so pleased with him, that he took him thence into the army, and made him *Tribunus militum*, a colonel in a legion, which was the preferment of an old soldier. All this was before his acquaintance with Meænas, and his introduction into the court of Augustus, and the familiarity of that great emperor; which, had he not been well-bred before, had been enough to civilize his conversation, and render him accomplished and knowing in all the arts of complacency and good behaviour; and, in short, an agreeable companion for the retired hours and privacies of a favourite, who was first minister. So that, upon the whole matter, Persius may be acknowledged to be equal with him, in those respects, though better born, and Juvenal inferior to both. If the advantage be any where, it is on the side of Horace; as much as the court of Augustus Cæsar was superior to that of Nero. As for the subjects which they treated, it will appear hereafter, that Horace writ not vulgarly on vulgar subjects, nor always chose them. His style is constantly accommodated to his subject, either high or low: if his fault be too much low-

ness, that of Persius is the fault of the hardness of his metaphors, and obscurity: and so they are equal in the failings of their style; where Juvenal manifestly triumphs over both of them.

The comparison betwixt Horace and Juvenal is more difficult; because their forces were more equal: A dispute has always been, and ever will continue, betwixt the favourers of the two poets.

Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.

I shall only venture to give my own opinion, and leave it for better judges to determine. If it be only argued in general, which of them was the better poet; the victory is already gained on the side of Horace. Virgil himself must yield to him in the delicacy of his turn, his choice of words, and perhaps the purity of his Latin. He who says that Pindar is inimitable, is himself inimitable in his odes. But the contention betwixt these two great masters, is for the prize of satire: in which controversy, all the odes and epodes of Horace are to stand excluded. I say this, because Horace has written many of them satirically, against his private enemies: yet these, if justly considered, are somewhat of the nature of the Greek Silli, which were invectives against particular sects and persons. But Horace had purged himself of this choler, before he entered on those discourses, which are more properly called the Roman satire: he has not now to do with a Lyce, a Canidia, a Cassius Severus, or a Menas; but is to correct the vices and the follies of his time, and to give the rules of a happy and virtuous life. In a word, that former sort of satire, which is known in England by the name of lampoon, is a dangerous sort of weapon, and for the most part unlawful. We have no moral right on the reputation of other men.

It is taking from them what we cannot restore to them. There are only two reasons, for which we may be permitted to write lampoons; and I will not promise that they can always justify us: the first is revenge, when we have been affronted in the same nature, or have been any ways notoriously abused, and can make ourselves no other reparation. And yet we know, that, in christian charity, all offences are to be forgiven, as we expect the like pardon for those which we daily commit against Almighty God. And this consideration has often made me tremble when I was saying our Saviour's prayer; for the plain condition of the forgiveness which we beg, is the pardoning of others the offences which they have done to us: for which reason I have many times avoided the commission of that fault, even when I have been notoriously provoked. Let not this, my lord, pass for vanity in me; for it is truth. More libels have been written against me, than almost any man now living: and I had reason on my side, to have defended my own innocence: I speak not of my poetry, which I have wholly given up to the critics; let them use it as they please; posterity, perhaps, may be more favourable to me: for interest and passion will lie buried in another age; and partiality and prejudice be forgotten. I speak of my morals, which have been sufficiently aspersed; that only sort of reputation ought to be dear to every honest man, and is to me. But let the world witness for me, that I have been often wanting to myself in that particular; I have seldom answered any scurrilous lampoon; when it was in my power to have exposed my enemies: and being naturally vindictive, have suffered in silence, and possessed my soul in quiet.

Any thing, though never so little, which a man speaks of himself, in my opinion, is still too much;

and therefore, I will wave this subject, and proceed to give the second reason, which may justify a poet, when he writes against a particular person; and that is, when he is become a public nuisance. And those, whom Horace in his satires, and Persius and Juvenal have mentioned in theirs, with a brand of infamy, are wholly such. It is an action of virtue to make examples of vicious men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their crimes and follies: both for their own amendment, if they are not yet incorrigible; and for the terror of others, to hinder them from falling into those enormities, which they see are so severely punished, in the persons of others. The first reason was only an excuse for revenge; but this second is absolutely of a poet's office to perform: but how few lampooners are there now living, who are capable of this duty! When they come in my way, it is impossible sometimes to avoid reading them. But, good God! how remote they are in common justice, from the choice of such persons as are the proper subject of satire! And how little wit they bring, for the support of their injustice! The weaker sex is their most ordinary theme; and the best and fairest are sure to be the most severely handled. Amongst men, those who are prosperously unjust, are intitled to panegyric; But afflicted virtue is insolently stabbed with all manner of reproaches; no decency is considered, no fulsomeness omitted; no venom is wanting, as far as dulness can supply it: for there is a perpetual dearth of wit; a barrenness of good sense and entertainment. The neglect of the readers will soon put an end to this sort of scribbling. There can be no pleasantry where there is no wit: no impression can be made, where there is no truth for the foundation. To conclude, they are like the fruits of the earth in this unnatural season: the

corn which held up its head, is spoiled with rankness; but the greater part of the harvest is laid along, and little of good income and wholesome nourishment is received into the barns. This is almost a digression, I confess to your lordship; but a just indignation forced it from me. Now I have removed this rubbish, I will return to the comparison of Juvenal and Horace.

I would willingly divide the palm betwixt them; upon the two heads of profit and delight, which are the two ends of poetry in general. It must be granted by the favourers of Juvenal, That Horace is the more copious and profitable in his instructions of human life: but in my particular opinion, which I set not up for a standard to better judgments, Juvenal is the more delightful author. I am profited by both, I am pleased with both; but I owe more to Horace, for my instruction; and more to Juvenal, for my pleasure. This, as I said, is my particular taste of these two authors: they, who will have either of them to excel the other in both qualities, can scarce give better reasons for their opinion, than I for mine: but all unbiassed readers will conclude, that my moderation is not to be condemned: to such impartial men I must appeal: for they, who have already formed their judgment, may justly stand suspected of prejudice; and though all who are my readers, will set up to be my judges, I enter my caveat against them, that they ought not so much as to be of my jury: Or, if they be admitted, it is but reason that they should first hear what I have to urge in the defence of my opinion.

That Horace is somewhat the better instructor of the two, is proved from hence, That his instructions are more general; Juvenal's more limited. So

that granting, that the counsels which they give are equally good for moral use; Horace, who gives the most various advice, and most applicable to all occasions which can occur to us in the course of our lives; as including in his discourses not only all the rules of morality, but also of civil conversation; is, undoubtedly, to be preferred to him, who is more circumscribed in his instructions, makes them to fewer people, and on fewer occasions, than the other. I may be pardoned for using an old saying, since it is true, and to the purpose, *Bonum quo communius, eo melius*. Juvenal, excepting only his first satire, is in all the rest confined to the exposing of some particular vice; that he lashes, and there he sticks. His sentences are truly shining and instructive: but they are sprinkled here and there. Horace is teaching us in every line, and is perpetually moral; he had found out the skill of Virgil, to hide his sentences: to give you the virtue of them, without shewing them in their full extent: which is the ostentation of a poet, and not his art: and this Petronius charges on the authors of his time, as a vice of writing, which was then growing on the age. *Ne sententiæ extra corpus orationis emineant*: he would have them weaved into the body of the work, and not appear embossed upon it, and striking directly on the reader's view. Folly was the proper quarry of Horace, and not vice: And, as there are but few notoriously wicked men, in comparison with a shoal of fools and fops; so it is a harder thing to make a man wise, than to make him honest: for the will is only to be reclaimed in the one; but the understanding is to be informed in the other. There are blind-fides and follies, even in the professors of moral philosophy; and there is not any one sect of them that Horace has not exposed. Which, as it was not the

design of Juvenal, who was wholly employed in lashing vices, some of them the most enormous that can be imagined; so perhaps, it was not so much his talent.

*Omne vaser vitium ridenti Flaccus amico,
Tangit, et admissus circum praecordia ludit.*

This was the commendation which Persius gave him: where by Vitium, he means those little vices, which we call follies, the defects of human understanding, or at most the peccadillos of life, rather than the tragical vices, to which men are hurried by their unruly passions and exorbitant desires. But in the word *omne*, which is *universal*, he concludes with me, that the divine wit of Horace left nothing untouched; that he entered into the inmost recesses of nature; found out the imperfections even of the most wise and grave, as well as of the common people; discovering, even in the great Trebatius, to whom he addresses the first satire, his hunting after business, and following the court, as well as in the persecutor Crispinus, his impertinence and importunity. It is true, he exposes Crispinus openly, as a common nuisance: but he rallies the other as a friend, more finely. The exhortations of Persius are confined to noblemen: and the Stoic philosophy is that alone which he recommends to them: Juvenal exhorts to particular virtues, as they are opposed to those vices against which he declaims: but Horace laughs to shame all follies, and insinuates virtue, rather by familiar examples, than by the severity of precepts.

This last consideration seems to incline the balance on the side of Horace, and to give him the preference to Juvenal, not only in profit, but in pleasure. But, after all, I must confess, that the delight which Horace gives me, is but languishing. Be pleased still to understand, that I speak of my own

taste only: he may ravish other men; but I am too stupid and insensible to be tickled. Where he barely grins himself, and, as Scaliger says, only shews his white teeth, he cannot provoke me to any laughter. His urbanity, that is, his good manners, are to be commended, but his wit is faint; and his salt, if I may dare to say so, almost insipid. Juvenal is of a more vigorous and masculine wit, he gives me as much pleasure as I can bear: he fully satisfies my expectation; he treats his subject home: his spleen is raised, and he raises mine: I have the pleasure of concernment in all he says: he drives his reader along with him; and when he is at the end of his way, I willingly stop with him. If he went another stage, it would be too far, it would make a journey of a progress, and turn delight into fatigue. When he gives over, it is a sign the subject is exhausted, and the wit of man can carry it no farther. If a fault can be justly found in him, it is that he is sometimes too luxuriant, too redundant; says more than he needs, like my friend the Plain-Dealer, but never more than pleases. Add to this, that his thoughts are as just as those of Horace, and much more elevated. His expressions are sonorous and more noble; his verse more numerous, and his words are suitable to his thoughts, sublime and lofty. All these contribute to the pleasure of the reader; and the greater the soul of him who reads, his transports are the greater. Horace is always on the amble, Juvenal on the gallop; but his way is perpetually on carpet-ground. He goes with more impetuosity than Horace, but as securely; and the swiftness adds a more lively agitation to the spirits. The low style of Horace is according to his subject, that is, generally groveling: I question not but he could have raised it: for the first epistle of the second book, which

he writes to Augustus, (a most instructive satire concerning poetry,) is of so much dignity in the words, and of so much elegance in the numbers, that the author plainly shews, the *Sermo Pedestris*, in his other satires, was rather his choice than his necessity. He was a rival to Lucilius his predecessor, and was resolved to surpass him in his own manner. Lucilius, as we see by his remaining fragments, minded neither his style nor his numbers, nor his purity of words, nor his run of verse. Horace therefore copes with him in that humble way of satire; writes under his own force, and carries a dead weight, that he may match his competitor in the race. This Timagine was the chief reason, why he minded only the clearness of his satire, and the cleanness of expression; without ascending to those heights, to which his own vigour might have carried him. But limiting his desires only to the conquest of Lucilius, he had the ends of his rival, who lived before him; but made way for a new conquest over himself, by Juvenal his successor. He could not give an equal pleasure to his reader, because he used not equal instruments. The fault was in the tools, and not in the workman. But versification and numbers are the greatest pleasures of poetry: Virgil knew it, and practised both so happily, that for ought I know, his greatest excellency is in his diction. In all other parts of poetry, is faultless; but in this he placed his chief perfection. And give me leave, my lord, since I have here an apt occasion, to say, that Virgil could have written sharper satires, than either Horace or Juvenal, if he would have employed his talent that way. I will produce a verse and half of his, in one of his eclogues, to justify my opinion; and with commas after every word, to shew, that he has given

almost as many lashes, as he has written syllables; it is against a bad poet, whose ill verses he describes:

— *Non tu, in triviiis, indocte, solebas,*

Stridenti, miserum, stipula, disperdere carmen?

But to return to my purpose, when there is any thing deficient in numbers and sound, the reader is uneasy and unsatisfied; he wants something of his complement, desires somewhat which he finds not: and this being the manifest defect of Horace, it is no wonder, that finding it supplied in Juvenal, we are more delighted with him. And besides this, the sauce of Juvenal is more poignant, to create in us an appetite of reading him. The meat of Horace is more nourishing; but the cookery of Juvenal more exquisite; so that granting Horace to be the more general philosopher, we cannot deny that Juvenal was the greater poet, I mean in satire. His thoughts are sharper, his indignation against vice is more vehement; his spirit has more of the common-wealth genius; he treats tyranny, and all the vices attending it, as they deserve, with the utmost rigour: and consequently a noble soul is better pleased with a zealous vindicator of Roman liberty, than with a temporizing poet, a well-mannered court-slave, and a man who is often afraid of laughing in the right place; who is ever decent, because he is naturally servile. After all, Horace had the disadvantage of the times in which he lived; they were better for the man, but worse for the satirist. It is generally said, that those enormous vices which were practised under the reign of Domitian, were not known in the time of Augustus Caesar: That therefore Juvenal had a larger field than Horace. Little follies were out of doors, when oppression was to be scourged instead of avarice; it was no longer time to turn into ridi-

cule the false opinions of philosophers, when the Roman liberty was to be asserted. There was more need of a Brutus in Domitian's days, to redeem or mend, than of a Horace, if he had then been living, to laugh at a fly-catcher. This reflexion at the same time excuses Horace, but exalts Juvenal. I have ended, before I was aware, the comparison of Horace and Juvenal, upon the topics of instruction and delight; and indeed, I may safely here conclude that common-place: for if we make Horace our minister of state in satire, and Juvenal of our private pleasures; I think the latter has no ill bargain of it. Let profit have the pre-eminence of honour, in the end of poetry. Pleasure, though but the second in degree, is the first in favour. And who would not chuse to be loved better, rather than to be more esteemed? But I am entered already upon another topic; which concerns the particular merits of these two satirists. However, I will pursue my business where I left it; and carry it farther than that common observation of the several ages in which these authors flourished. When Horace writ his satires, the monarchy of his Caesar was in its newness, and the government but just made easy to the conquered people. They could not possibly have forgotten the usurpation of that prince upon their freedom, nor the violent methods which he had used, in the compassing that vast design: they yet remembered his proscriptions, and the slaughter of so many noble Romans their defenders. Amongst the rest, that horrible action of his, when he forced Livia from the arms of her husband, who was constrained to see her married, as Dion relates the story, and, big with child as she was, conveyed to the bed of his insulting rival. The same Dion Cassius gives us another instance of the crime before mentioned: that Corne-

lius Sisenna, being reproached in full senate, with the licentious conduct of his wife, returned this answer; that he had married her by the counsel of Augustus: intimating, says my author, that Augustus had obliged him to that marriage, that he might, under that covert, have the more free access unto her. His adulteries were still before their eyes, but they must be patient, where they had not power. In other things that emperor was moderate enough: property was generally secured; and the people entertained with public shows and donatives, to make them more easily digest their lost liberty. But Augustus, who was conscious to himself of so many crimes which he had committed, thought in the first place, to provide for his own reputation, by making an edict against lampoons and satires, and the authors of those defamatory writings, which my author Tacitus, from the law-term, calls *famosos libellos*.

In the first book of his Annals, he gives the following account of it, in these words: *Primus Augustus cognitionem de famosis libellis specie legis ejus, tractavit; commotus Cassii Severi libidine, qua viros foeminasque inlustres, procacibus scriptis diffamaverat.* Thus in English: 'Augustus was the first, who under the colour of that law took cognisance of lampoons; being provoked to it, by the petulancy of Cassius Severus, who had defamed many illustrious persons of both sexes, in his writings.' The law to which Tacitus refers, was *Lex laesae majestatis*, commonly called, for the sake of brevity, *majestas*; or, as we say, high treason: he means not that this law had not been enacted formerly: for it had been made by the Decemviri, and was inscribed amongst the rest in the twelve tables, to prevent the aspersion of the Roman majesty, either of the people themselves, or their religion, or their magi-

strates: and the infringement of it was capital: that is, the offender was whipt to death, with the Falces, which were born before their chief officers of Rome. But Augustus was the first, who restored that intermitted law. By the words, *Under colour of that law*, he insinuates that Augustus caused it to be executed, on pretence of those libels, which were written by Cassius Severus, against the nobility: But, in truth, to save himself from such defamatory verses. Suetonius likewise makes mention of it thus: *Sparfos de se in curia famosos libellos, nec expavit, et magna cura redarguit. Ac ne requisitis quidem auctoribus, id modo censuit, cognoscendum post hac, de iis qui libellos aut carmina ad infamiam cuiuspiam sub alieno nomine edant.* Augustus was not afraid of libels, says that author; yet he took all care imaginable to have them answered; and then decreed, that for the time to come, the authors of them should be punished. But Aurelius makes it yet more clear, according to my sense, that this emperor for his own sake durst not permit them: *Fecit id Augustus in speciem, et quasi gratificaretur populo Romano, et primoribus urbis; sed revera ut sibi consuleret: Nam habuit in animo, comprimere nimiam quorundam procacitatem in loquendo, a qua nec ipse exemptus fuit. Nam suo nomine compefcere erat invidiosum, sub alieno facile et utile. Ergo specie legis tractavit, quasi populi Romani majestas infamaretur.* This, I think, is a sufficient comment on that passage of Tacitus; I will add only by the way, that the whole family of the Caesars, and all their relations, were included in the law; because the majesty of the Romans in the time of the empire was wholly in that house: *Omnia Caesar erat*: they were all accounted sacred who belonged to him. As for Cassius Severus, he was contemporary with Horace; and was the same poet against whom he writes

in his epodes, under this title, *In Cassum Severum maledicum poetam*; perhaps intending to kill two crows, according to our proverb, with one stone; and revenge both himself and his emperor together.

From hence I may reasonably conclude, That Augustus, who was not altogether so good as he was wise, had some by-respect in the enacting of this law: for to do any thing for nothing, was not his maxim. Horace, as he was a courtier, complied with the interest of his master; and avoiding the lashing of greater crimes, confined himself to the ridiculing of petty vices and common follies; excepting only some reserved cases, in his odes and epodes, of his own particular quarrels, which either with permission of the magistrate, or without it, every man will revenge, though I say not that he should; for *prior læsit*, is a good excuse in the civil law, if christianity had not taught us to forgive. However, he was not the proper man to arraign great vices, at least if the stories which we hear of him are true, that he practised some, which I will not here mention, out of honour to him. It was not for a Clodius to accuse adulterers, especially when Augustus was of that number: so that though his age was not exempted from the worst of villanies, there was no freedom left to reprehend them, by reason of the edict. And our poet was not fit to represent them in an odious character, because himself was dipt in the same actions. Upon this account, without farther insisting on the different tempers of Juvenal and Horace, I conclude, that the subjects which Horace chose for satire, are of a lower nature than those of which Juvenal has written.

Thus I have treated, in a new method, the comparison betwixt Horace, Juvenal, and Persius; some.

what of their particular manner belonging to all of them is yet remaining to be considered. Persius was grave, and particularly opposed his gravity to lewdness, which was the predominant vice in Nero's court, at the time when he published his satires, which was before that emperor fell into the excess of cruelty. Horace was a mild admonisher, a court-satirist, fit for the gentle times of Augustus, and more fit, for the reasons which I have already given. Juvenal was as proper for his times, as they for theirs: his was an age that deserved a more severe chastisement; vices were more gross and open, more flagitious, more encouraged by the example of a tyrant, and more protected by his authority. Therefore, where-soever Juvenal mentions Nero, he means Domitian, whom he dares not attack in his own person, but scourges him by proxy. Heinsius urges in praise of Horace, that according to the ancient art and law of satire, it should be nearer to comedy than tragedy; not declaiming against vice, but only laughing at it. Neither Persius nor Juvenal were ignorant of this, for they had both studied Horace. And the thing itself is plainly true. But as they had read Horace, they had likewise read Lucilius, of whom Persius says,

—*Secuit urbem; et genuinum fregit in illis;*

Meaning Mutius and Lupus: and Juvenal also mentions him in these words:

*Ense velut stricto, quoties Lucilius ardens
Infremuit, etc.* —————

So that they thought the imitation of Lucilius was more proper to their purpose than that of Horace. They changed satire, says Holiday; but they changed it for the better: for the business being to reform great vices, chastisement goes farther than admoniti-

on; whereas a perpetual grin, like that of Horace, does rather anger than amend a man.

Thus far that learned critic, Barten Holiday, whose interpretation and illustrations of Juvenal are as excellent, as the verse of his translation and his English are lame and pitiful. For it is not enough to give us the meaning of a poet, which I acknowledge him to have performed most faithfully; but he must also imitate his genius, and his numbers, as far as the English will come up to the elegance of the original. In few words, it is only for a poet to translate a poet. Holiday and Stapylton had not enough considered this, when they attempted Juvenal: but I forbear reflections; only I beg leave to take notice of this sentence, where Holiday says, *A perpetual grin, like that of Horace, rather angers than amends a man.* I cannot give him up the manner of Horace in low satire so easily: let the chastisements of Juvenal be never so necessary for his new kind of satire; let him declaim as wittily and sharply as he pleases, yet still the nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine raillery. This, my lord, is your particular talent, to which even Juvenal could not arrive. It is not reading, it is not imitation of an author, which can produce this fineness: it must be in-born, it must proceed from a genius, and particular way of thinking, which is not to be taught; and therefore not to be imitated by him who has it not from nature: how easy it is to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any

depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade; which yet no master can teach to his apprentice: he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer in his practice. Neither is it true, that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner; and a fool feels it not. The occasion of an offence may possibly be given, but he cannot take it. If it be granted, that in effect this way does more mischief; that a man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible himself, yet the malicious world will find it for him: yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch's wife said of his servant, of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging; but to make a malefactor die sweetly, was only belonging to her husband. I wish I could apply it to myself; if the reader would be kind enough to think it belongs to me. The character of Zimri in my Absalom, is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem: it is not bloody, but is ridiculous enough: and he for whom it was intended, was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had railed, I might have suffered for it justly; but I managed mine own work more happily, perhaps more dextrously. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blind-sides, and little extravagancies: to which, the wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious. It succeeded as I wished; the jest went round, and he was laughed at in his turn who began the frolic.

And thus, my lord, you see I have preferred the manner of Horace, and of your lordship, in this kind of satire, to that of Juvenal; and I think rea-

sonably. Holiday ought not to have arraigned so great an author, for that which was his excellency and his merit: Or if he did, on such a palpable mistake, he might expect that some one might possibly arise, either in his own time, or after him, to rectify his error, and restore to Horace that commendation, of which he has so unjustly robbed him. And let the manes of Juvenal forgive me, if I say, that this way of Horace was the best for amending manners, as it is the most difficult. His was *ense rescindendum*; but that of Horace was a pleasant cure, with all the limbs preserved entire; and, as our mountebanks tell us in their bills, without keeping the patient within doors for a day. What they promise only, Horace has effectually performed: yet I contradict not the proposition which I formerly advanced: Juvenal's times required a more painful kind of operation: but if he had lived in the age of Horace, I must needs affirm, that he had it not about him. He took the method which was prescribed him by his own genius; which was sharp and eager; he could not rally, but he could declaim: and as his provocations were great, he has revenged them tragically. This notwithstanding, I am to say another word, which, as true as it is, will yet displease the partial admirers of our Horace. I have hinted it before; but it is time for me now to speak more plainly.

This manner of Horace is indeed the best; but Horace has not executed it altogether so happily, at least not often. The manner of Juvenal is confessed to be inferior to the former; but Juvenal has excelled him in his performance. Juvenal has railed more wittily than Horace has rallied. Horace means to make his reader laugh; but he is not sure of his

experiment. Juvenal always intends to move your indignation; and he always brings about his purpose. Horace, for ought I know, might have tickled the people of his age; but amongst the moderns he is not so successful. They who say he entertains so pleasantly, may perhaps value themselves on the quickness of their own understandings, that they can see a jest farther off than other men: they may find occasion of laughter in the wit-battle of the two buffoons, Sormentus and Cicerrus; and hold their sides for fear of bursting, when Rupilius and Perlius are scolding. For my own part, I can only like the characters of all four, which are judiciously given; but for my heart I cannot so much as smile at their insipid raillery. I see not why Perlius should call upon Brutus, to revenge him on his adversary; and that because he had killed Julius Caesar for endeavouring to be a king, therefore he should be desired to murder Rupilius, only because his name was Mr. King. A miserable clench, in my opinion, for Horace to record: I have heard honest Mr. Swan make many a better, and yet have had the grace to hold my countenance. But it may be puns were then in fashion, as they were wit in the sermons of the last age, and in the court of king Charles II. I am sorry to say it, for the sake of Horace; but certain it is, he has no fine palate who can feed so heartily on garbage.

But I have already wearied myself, and doubt not but I have tired your lordship's patience, with this long rambling, and, I fear, trivial discourse. Upon the one half of the merit, that is, pleasure, I cannot but conclude that Juvenal was the better satirist: they, who will descend into his particular praises, may find them at large in the dissertation of the learned Rigaltius to Thuanus. As for Perlius, I

have given the reasons why I think him inferior to both of them: yet I have one thing to add on that subject.

Barten Holiday, who translated both Juvenal and Persius, has made this distinction betwixt them, which is no less true than witty; That, in Persius, the difficulty is to find a meaning; in Juvenal to chuse a meaning; so crabbed is Persius, and so copious is Juvenal: so much the understanding is employed in one, and so much the judgment in the other. So difficult it is to find any sense in the former, and the best sense of the latter.

If, on the other side, any one suppose I have commended Horace below his merit, when I have allowed him but the second place, I desire him to consider, if Juvenal, a man of excellent natural endowments, besides the advantages of diligence and study, and coming after him, and building upon his foundations, might not probably, with all these helps, surpass him? And whether it be any dishonour to Horace to be thus surpassed; since no art, or science, is at once begun and perfected, but that it must pass first through many hands, and even thro' several ages? If Lucilius could add to Ennius, and Horace to Lucilius, why, without any diminution to the fame of Horace, might not Juvenal give the last perfection to that work? Or rather, what disreputation is it to Horace, that Juvenal excels in the tragical satire, as Horace does in the comical? I have read over attentively both Heinsius and Dacier, in their commendations of Horace; but I can find no more in either of them, for the preference of him to Juvenal, than the instructive part; the part of wisdom; and not that of pleasure; which therefore is here allowed him, notwithstanding what Scaliger

and Rigaltius have pleaded to the contrary for Juvenal. And to shew that I am impartial, I will here translate what Dacier has said on that subject.

I cannot give a more just idea of the two books of satires made by Horace, than by comparing them to the statues of the Sileni, to which Alcibiades compares Socrates, in the Symposium. They were figures, which had nothing of agreeable, nothing of beauty on their out-side: but when any one took the pains to open them, and search into them, he there found the figures of all the deities. So, in the shape that Horace presents himself to us, in his satires, we see nothing at the first view which deserves our attention. It seems that he is rather an amusement for children, than for the serious consideration of men: but when we take away his crust, and that which hides him from our sight, when we discover him to the bottom, then we find all the divinities in a full assembly: That is to say, all the virtues which ought to be the continual exercise of those, who seriously endeavour to correct their vices.

It is easy to observe, that Dacier, in this noble similitude, has confined the praise of his author wholly to the instructive part: the commendation turns on this, and so does that which follows.

In these two books of satire, it is the business of Horace to instruct us how to combat our vices, to regulate our passions, to follow nature, to give bounds to our desires, to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood, and betwixt our conceptions of things, and things themselves: to come back from our prejudicate opinions, to understand exactly the principles and motives of all our actions; and to avoid the ridicule, into which all men necessarily fall, who are intoxicated with those notions which they have receiv-

ed from their masters; and which they obstinately retain, without examining whether or no they be founded on right reason.

In a word, he labours to render us happy in relation to ourselves, agreeable and faithful to our friends, and discreet, serviceable, and well-bred in relation to those with whom we are obliged to live, and to converse. To make his figures intelligible, to conduct his readers through the labyrinth of some perplexed sentence, or obscure parenthesis, is no great matter: And, as Epictetus says, there is nothing of beauty in all this, or what is worthy of a prudent man. The principal business, and which is of most importance to us, is to shew the use, the reason, and the proof of his precepts.

They who endeavour not to correct themselves, according to so exact a model, are just like the patients, who have open before them a book of admirable receipts for their diseases, and please themselves with reading it, without comprehending the nature of the remedies, or how to apply them to their cure.

Let Horace go off with these encomiums, which he has so well deserved.

To conclude the contention betwixt our three poets, I will use the words of Virgil, in his fifth Æneid, where Æneas proposes the rewards of the foot race, to the three first, who should reach the goal.

—Tres præmia primi
Accipient, flavaque caput nectentur oliva:

Let these three ancients be preferred to all the moderns; as first arriving at the goal: let them all be crowned as victors, with the wreath that properly belongs to satire. But, after that, with this distinction amongst themselves,

Primus equum phaleris insignem victor habeto.

Let Juvenal ride first in triumph.

*Alter Amazoniam pharetram, plenamque sagittis
Threiciis, lato quam circumplectitur auro*

Balteus, et tereti subnectit fibula gemma.

Let Horace who is the second, and but just the second, carry off the quivers and the arrows, as the badges of his satire; and the golden belt, and the diamond button.

Tertius, Argolicae haec clypeo contentus abito.

And let Persius, the last of the first three worthies, be contented with this Grecian shield, and with victory, not only over all the Grecians, who were ignorant of the Roman satire, but over all the moderns in succeeding ages; excepting Boileau and your lordship.

And thus I have given the history of satire, and derived it from Ennius to your lordship; that is, from its first rudiments of barbarity, to its last polishing and perfection: Which is, with Virgil, in his address to Augustus.

—nomen fama tot ferre per annos,

Tithoni prima quot abest ab origine Caesar.

I said only from Ennius; but I may safely carry it higher, as far as Livius Andronicus; who, as I have said formerly, taught the first play at Rome, in the year *ab urbe condita* CCCCCXIV. I have since desired my learned friend, Mr. Maidwell, to compute the difference of times, betwixt Aristophanes and Livius Andronicus; and he assures me from the best chronologers, that Plutus, the last of Aristophanes's plays, was represented at Athens, in the year of the 97th olympiad; which agrees with the year *urbis conditae* CCCLXIV. So that the difference of years

betwixt Aristophanes and Andronicus is 150; from whence I have probably deduced, that Livius Andronicus, who was a Grecian, had read the plays of the old comedy, which were satirical, and also of the new; for Menander was fifty years before him, which must needs be a great light to him in his own plays, that were of the satirical nature. That the Romans had farces before this, it is true; but then they had no communication with Greece: so that Andronicus was the first who wrote after the manner of the old comedy, in his plays; he was imitated by Ennius, about thirty years afterwards. Though the former writ fables; the latter, speaking properly, began the Roman satire. According to that description, which Juvenal gives of it in his first;

*Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli.*

This is that in which I have made bold to differ from Casaubon, Rigaltius, Dacier, and indeed from all the modern critics, that not Ennius, but Andronicus was the first, who, by the *Archaea Comoedia* of the Greeks, added many beauties to the first rude and barbarous Roman satire: which sort of poem, though we had not derived from Rome, yet nature teaches it mankind, in all ages, and in every country.

It is but necessary, that after so much has been said of satire, some definition of it should be given. Heinſius, in his dissertations on Horace, makes it for me, in these words; *Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for the purging of our minds: in which human vices, ignorance, and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them, in every man, are severely reprehended; partly dramatically, partly simply, and sometimes in both kinds of speaking; but for the most part figuratively, and oc-*

cultly: consisting in a low familiar way, chiefly in a sharp and pungent manner of speech: but partly, also, in a facetious and civil way of jesting; by which either hatred, or laughter, or indignation is moved.—

Where I cannot but observe, that this obscure and perplexed definition, or rather description of satire, is wholly accommodated to the Horatian way; and excluding the works of Juvenal and Persius, as foreign from that kind of poem: the clause in the beginning of it (*without a series of action*) distinguishes satire properly from stage-plays, which are all of one action, and one continued series of action. The end or scope of satire is to purge the passions; so far it is common to the satires of Juvenal and Persius: the rest which follows, is also generally belonging to all three; till he comes upon us, with the excluding clause (*consisting in a low familiar way of speech*) which is the proper character of Horace; and from which, the other two, for their honour be it spoken, are far distant. But how come lowliness of style, and the familiarity of words, to be so much the propriety of satire, that without them, a poet can be no more a satirist, than without risibility he can be a man? Is the fault of Horace to be made the virtue and standing rule of this poem? Is the grand sophos of Persius, and the sublimity of Juvenal to be circumscribed, with the meanness of words and vulgarity of expression? If Horace refused the pains of numbers, and the loftiness of figures, are they bound to follow so ill a precedent? Let him walk a-foot with his pad in his hand, for his own pleasure; but let not them be accounted no poets, who chuse to mount, and shew their horsemanship. Holiday is not afraid to say, that there was never such a fall, as from his odes to his satires, and that he, injuriously to himself, untuned his harp: The majestic

way of Persius and Juvenal was new when they began it; but it is old to us; and what poems have not, with time, received an alteration in their fashion? Which alteration, says Holiday, is to after-times, as good a warrant as the first. Has not Virgil changed the manners of Homer's heroes in his *Æneid*? certainly he has, and for the better. For Virgil's age was more civilized, and better bred; and he writ according to the politeness of Rome, under the reign of Augustus Cæsar; not to the rudeness of Agamemnon's age, or the time of Homer. Why should we offer to confine free spirits to one form, when we cannot so much as confine our bodies to one fashion of apparel? Would not Donn's satires, which abound with so much wit, appear more charming, if he had taken care of his words, and of his numbers? But he followed Horace so very close, that of necessity he must fall with him: And I may safely say it of this present age, That if we are not so great wits as Donn, yet certainly we are better poets.

But I have said enough, and it may be too much on this subject. Will your lordship be pleased to prolong my audience, only so far, till I tell you my own trivial thoughts, how a modern satire should be made. I will not deviate in the least from the precepts and examples of the ancients, who were always our best masters. I will only illustrate them, and discover some of the hidden beauties in their designs, that we thereby may form our own in imitation of them. Will you please but to observe, that Persius, the least in dignity of all the three, has notwithstanding been the first, who has discovered to us this important secret, in the designing of a perfect satire; that it ought only to treat of one subject; to be confined to one particular theme; or, at least, to one principally. If other vices occur in the management

of the chief, they should only be transiently lashed, and not be insisted on, so as to make the design double. As in a play of the English fashion, which we call a Tragi-comedy, there is to be but one main design: and though there be an under-plot, or second walk of comical characters and adventures, yet they are subservient to the chief fable, carried along under it, and helping to it; so that the drama may not seem a monster with two heads. Thus the Copernican system of the planets makes the moon to be moved by the motion of the earth, and carried about her orb, as a dependent of hers. Mascardi in his discourse of the *Doppia favola*, or double tale in plays, gives an instance of it, in the famous pastoral of Guarini, called *Il Pastor Fido*; where Corisca and the Satyr are the under-parts: yet we may observe, that Corisca is brought into the body of the plot, and made subservient to it. It is certain, that the divine wit of Horace was not ignorant of this rule, that a play, though it consists of many parts, must yet be one in the action, and must drive on the accomplishment of one design; for he gives this very precept,

——— *Sit quodvis simplex duntaxat et unum;*

Yet he seems not much to mind it in his satires, many of them consisting of more arguments than one; and the second without dependence on the first. Casaubon has observed this before me, in his preference of Persius to Horace: and will have his own beloved author to be the first, who found out, and introduced this method of confining himself to one subject. I know it may be urged in defence of Horace, that this unity is not necessary; because the very word *Satura* signifies a dish plentifully stored with all variety of fruits and grains. Yet Juvenal, who calls his poems a *Farrago*, which is a word of the same signification with *Satura*, has chosen to follow the same method

of Persius, and not of Horace. And Boileau, whose example alone is a sufficient authority, has wholly confined himself, in all his satires, to this unity of design. That variety which is not to be found in any one satire, is, at least, in many, written on several occasions. And if variety be of absolute necessity in every one of them, according to the etymology of the word; yet it may arise naturally from one subject, as it is diversly treated, in the several subordinate branches of it; all relating to the chief. It may be illustrated accordingly with variety of examples in the subdivisions of it; and with as many precepts as there are members of it; which all together may complete that olla, or hotch-potch, which is properly a satire.

Under this unity of theme, or subject, is comprehended another rule for perfecting the design of true satire. The poet is bound, and that *ex officio*, to give his reader some one precept of moral virtue; and to caution him against some one particular vice or folly. Other virtues, subordinate to the first, may be recommended, under that chief head; and other vices or follies may be scourged, besides that which he principally intends. But he is chiefly to inculcate one virtue, and insist on that. Thus Juvenal in every satire, excepting the first, ties himself to one principal instructive point, or to the shaming of moral evil. Even in the sixth, which seems only an arraignment of the whole sex of woman-kind, there is a latent admonition to avoid ill women, by shewing how very few, who are virtuous and good, are to be found amongst them. But this, though the wittiest of all his satires, has yet the least of truth or instruction in it. He has run himself into his old declamatory way, and almost forgotten that he was now setting up for a moral poet.

Perſius is never wanting to us in ſome profitable doctrine, and in expoſing the oppoſite vices to it. His kind of philoſophy is one, which is the Stoic; and every ſatire is a comment on one particular dogma of that ſect; unleſs we will except the firſt, which is againſt bad writers; and yet even there he forgets not the precepts of the Porch. In general, all virtues are every where to be praiſed and recommended to practice; and all vices to be reprehended, and made either odious or ridiculous; or elſe there is a fundamental error in the whole deſign.

I have already declared who are the only perſons that are the adequate object of private ſatire, and who they are that may properly be expoſed by name for public examples of vices and follies; and therefore, I will trouble your lordſhip no farther with them. Of the beſt and fineſt manner of ſatire, I have ſaid enough in the compariſon betwixt Juvenal and Horace: it is that ſharp, well-mannered way of laughing a folly out of countenance, of which your lordſhip is the beſt maſter in this age. I will proceed to the verſification, which is moſt proper for it, and add ſomething to what I have ſaid already on that ſubject. The ſort of verſe which is called Burleſque, conſiſting of eight ſyllables, or four feet, is that which our excellent Hudibras has choſen. I ought to have mentioned him before, when I ſpoke of Donn; but by a ſlip of an old man's memory he was forgotten. The worth of his poem is too well known to need my commendation, and he is above my cenſure: his ſatire is of the Varſonian kind, though unmixed with proſe. The choice of his numbers is ſuitable enough to his deſign, as he has managed it: but in any other hand, the ſhortneſs of his verſe, and the quick returns of rhyme, had debaſed the dignity of

style. And besides, the double rhyme, (a necessary companion of burlesque writing) is not so proper for manly satire, for it turns earnest too much to jest, and gives us a boyish kind of pleasure. It tickles awkwardly with a kind of pain, to the best sort of readers; we are pleased ungratefully, and if I may say so, against our liking. We thank him not for giving us that unseasonable delight, when we know he could have given us a better, and more solid. He might have left that task to others, who, not being able to put in thought, can only make us grin with the excrescence of a word of two or three syllables in the close. It is, indeed, below so great a master to make use of such a little instrument. But his good sense is perpetually shining through all he writes; it affords us not the time of finding faults. We pass through the levity of his rhyme, and are immediately carried into some admirable useful thought. After all, he has chosen this kind of verse; and has written the best in it: and had he taken another, he would always have excelled. As we say of a court-favourite, that whatsoever his office be, he still makes it uppermost, and most beneficial to himself.

The quickness of your imagination, my lord, has already prevented me; and you know before-hand, that I would prefer the verse of ten syllables, which we call the English heroic, to that of eight. This is truly my opinion: for this sort of number is more roomy: the thought can turn itself with greater ease in a larger compass. When the rhyme comes too thick upon us, it straitens the expression; we are thinking of the close, when we should be employed in adorning the thought. It makes a poet giddy with turning in a space too narrow for his imagination; he loses many beauties, without gaining one advan-

vantage. For a burlesque rhyme, I have already concluded to be none; or if it were, it is more easily purchased in ten syllables than in eight: in both occasions it is as in a tennis-court, when the strokes of greater force are given, when we strike out and play at length. Tassone and Boileau have left us the best examples of this way, in the *Secchia Rapita*, and the *Lutrin*. And next them Merlin Coccajus in his *Baldus*. I will speak only of the two former, because the last is written in Latin verse. The *Secchia Rapita* is an Italian poem, a satire of the Varroian kind. It is written in the Stanza of eight, which is their measure for heroic verse. The words are stately, the numbers smooth, the turn both of thoughts and words is happy. The first six lines of the Stanza seem majestic and severe; but the two last turn them all into a pleasant ridicule. Boileau, if I am not much deceived, has modeled from hence his famous *Lutrin*. He had read the burlesque poetry of Scarron, with some kind of indignation, as witty as it was, and found nothing in France that was worthy of his imitation. But he copied the Italian so well, that his own may pass for an original. He writes it in the French heroic verse, and calls it an heroic poem: his subject is trivial, but his verse is noble. I doubt not but he had Virgil in his eye, for we find many admirable imitations of him, and some parodies; as particularly this passage in the fourth of the *Aeneid*.

*Nec tibi diua parens; generis nec Dardanus auctor,
 Persido; sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
 Caucasus; Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.*

Which he thus translates, keeping to the words, but altering the sense:

Non, ton pere a Paris, ne fut point Boulanger :
 Et tu n'es point du sang de Gervais Horloger :
 Ta mere ne fut point la Maitresse d'un Coche ;
 Caucafe dans ses flancs, te forma d'une Roche :
 Une tigresse affreuse, en quelque antre écarté,
 Ta fit, avec son lait, succer sa Crauté.

And, as Virgil in his fourth Georgic of the bees, perpetually raises the lowness of his subject, by the loftiness of his words ; and ennobles it by comparisons drawn from empires, and from monarchs ;

*Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum,
 Magnanimosque duces, totiusque ordine gentis
 Mores et studia, et populos, et praelia dicam.*

And again :

*Sic genus immortale manet ; multosque per annos
 Stat fortuna domus, et avi numerantur avorum.*

We see Boileau pursuing him in the same flights ; and scarcely yielding to his master. This, I think, my lord, to be the most beautiful, and most noble kind of satire. Here is the majesty of the heroic, finely mixed with the venom of the other ; and raising the delight which otherwise would be flat and vulgar, by the sublimity of the expression. I could say somewhat more of the delicacy of this and some other of his satires ; but it might turn to his prejudice, if it were carried back to France.

I have given your lordship but this bare hint, in what verse, and in what manner this sort of satire may best be managed. Had I time, I could enlarge on the beautiful turns of words and thoughts ; which are as requisite in this, as in heroic poetry itself ; of which the satire is undoubtedly a species. With these beautiful turns I confess myself to have been unacquainted, till a

bout twenty years ago, in a conversation which I had with that noble wit of Scotland, Sir George Mackenzy: he asked me why I did not imitate in my verses the turns of Mr. Waller and Sir John Denham; of which, he repeated many to me. I had often read with pleasure, and with some profit, those two fathers of our English poetry; but had not seriously enough considered those beauties which give the last perfection to their works. Some sprinklings of this kind I had also formerly in my plays; but they were casual, and not designed. But this hint, thus seasonably given me, first made me sensible of my own wants, and brought me afterwards to seek for the supply of them in other English authors. I looked over the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley; there I found, instead of them, the points of wit, and quirks of epigram, even in the Davideis, an heroic poem, which is of an opposite nature to those puerilities; but no elegant turns, either on the word or on the thought. Then I consulted a greater genius (without offence to the manes of that noble author) I mean Milton; but as he endeavours every where to express Homer, whose age had not arrived to that fineness, I found in him a true sublimity, lofty thoughts, which were clothed with admirable Grecisms, and ancient words, which he had been digging from the mines of Chaucer and Spenser, and which, with all their rusticity, had somewhat of venerable in them. But I found not there neither that for which I looked. At last I had recourse to his master, Spenser, the author of that immortal poem called the Fairy Queen; and there I met with that which I had been looking for so long in vain. Spenser had studied Virgil to as much advantage as Milton had done Homer; and amongst the rest of his excellencies had copied that. Looking farther into

the Italian, I found Tasso had done the same: nay, more, that all the sonnets in that language, are on the turn of the first thought; which Mr. Walsh, in his late ingenious preface to his poems, has observed. In short, Virgil and Ovid are the two principal fountains of them in Latin poetry. And the French at this day are so fond of them, that they judge them to be the first beauties. *Delicate, et bien tourné*, are the highest commendations, which they bestow, on somewhat which they think a master-piece.

An example of the turn on words, amongst a thousand others, is that in the last book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

*Heu quantum scelus est, in viscera, viscera condi!
Congestoque avidum pinguescere corpore corpus;
Alteriusque animantem animantis vivere leto!*

An example on the turn both of thoughts and words, is to be found in Catullus; in the complaint of Ariadne, when she was left by Theseus:

*Tum jam nulla viro juranti foemina credat;
Nulla viri speret sermones esse fideles:
Qui dum aliquid cupiens animus praegestit apisci,
Nil metuunt jurare; nihil promittere parcunt.
Sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libido est,
Dicta nihil metuere; nihil perjuria curant.*

An extraordinary turn upon the words, is that in Ovid's *Epistolae Heroidum*, of Sappho to Phaon:

*Si nisi quae forma poterit te digna videri,
Nulla futura tua est; nulla futura tua est.*

Lastly, a turn which I cannot say is absolutely on words, for the thought turns with them, is in the fourth Georgic of Virgil; where Orpheus is to receive his wife from hell, on express condition not to look on her, till she was come on earth:

*Cam subita incautum dementia cepit amantem;
Ignotenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.*

I will not burden your lordship with more of them; for I write to a master, who understands them better than myself. But I may safely conclude them to be great beauties; I might descend also to the mechanic beauties of heroic verse; but we have yet no English Prosodia, not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar; so that our language is in a manner barbarous; and what government will encourage any one, or more who are capable of refining it, I know not: but nothing under a public expence can go through with it. And I rather fear a declination of the language, than hope an advancement of it in the present age.

I am still speaking to you, my lord; though in all probability, you are already out of hearing. Nothing, which my meanness can produce, is worthy of this long attention. But I am come to the last petition of Abraham; If there be ten righteous lines, in this vast preface, spare it for their sake; and also spare the next city, because it is but a little one.

I would excuse the performance of this translation, if it were all my own; but the better, though not the greater part being the work of some gentlemen, who have succeeded very happily in their undertaking; let their excellencies atone for my imperfections, and those of my sons. I have perused some of the satires, which are done by other hands; and they seem to me as perfect in their kind, as any thing I have seen in English verse. The common way which we have taken, is not a literal translation, but a kind of paraphrase; or somewhat which is yet more loose, betwixt a paraphrase and imitation. It was

not possible for us, or any men, to have made it pleasant any other way. If rendering the exact sense of these authors, almost line for line, had been our business, Barten Holiday had done it already to our hands: And, by the help of his learned notes and illustrations, not only Juvenal and Persius, but what yet is more obscure, his own verses, might be understood.

But he wrote for fame, and wrote to scholars: we write only for the pleasure and entertainment of those gentlemen and ladies, who, though they are not scholars, are not ignorant: persons of understanding and good sense; who not having been conversant in the original, or at least not having made Latin verse so much their business, as to be critics in it, would be glad to find, if the wit of our two great authors be answerable to their fame and reputation in the world. We have therefore endeavoured to give the public all the satisfaction we are able in this kind.

And if we are not altogether so faithful to our author, as our predecessors Holiday and Stapylton; yet we may challenge to ourselves this praise, That we shall be far more pleasing to our readers. We have followed our authors at greater distance, tho' not step by step, as they have done. For oftentimes they have gone so close, that they have trod on the heels of Juvenal and Persius, and hurt them by their too near approach. A noble author would not be pursued too close by a translator. We lose his spirit, when we think to take his body. The grosser part remains with us, but the soul is flown away, in some noble expression, or some delicate turn of words, or thought. Thus Holiday, who made this way his choice, seized the meaning of Juvenal; but the poetry has always escaped him.

They who will not grant me, that pleasure is one of the ends of poetry, but that it is only a means of compassing the only end, which is instruction; must yet allow, that without the means of pleasure, the instruction is but a bare and dry philosophy; a crude preparation of morals, which we may have from Aristotle and Epictetus, with more profit than from any poet: neither Holiday nor Stapylton have imitated Juvenal, in the poetical part of him, his diction and his elocution. Nor had they been poets, as neither of them were; yet in the way they took, it was impossible for them to have succeeded in the poetic part.

The English verse, which we call heroic, consists of no more than ten syllables; the Latin hexameter sometimes rises to seventeen; as for example, this verse in Virgil:

Pulverulenta putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.

Here is the difference of no less than seven syllables in a line, betwixt the English and the Latin. Now the medium of these, is about fourteen syllables; because the dactyle is a more frequent foot in hexameters than the spondee.

But Holiday, without considering that he writ with the disadvantage of four syllables less in every verse, endeavours to make one of his lines to comprehend the sense of one of Juvenal's. According to the falsity of the proposition, was the success. He was forced to crowd his verse with ill-sounding monosyllables, of which our barbarous language affords him a wild plenty: and by that means he arrived at his pedantic end, which was to make a literal translation: his verses have nothing of verse in them, but only the worst part of it, the rhyme; and that, into the bargain, is far from good. But, which

is more intolerable, by cramming his ill-chosen, and worse-sounding monosyllables so close together; the very sense which he endeavours to explain, is become more obscure than that of his author. So that Holiday himself cannot be understood, without as large a commentary, as that which he makes on his two authors. For my own part, I can make a shift to find the meaning of Juvenal without his notes: but his translation is more difficult than his author. And I find beauties in the Latin to recompence my pains; but in Holiday and Stapylton, my ears, in the first place, are mortally offended; and then their sense is so perplexed, that I return to the original, as the more pleasing task, as well as the more easy.

This must be said for our translation, that if we give not the whole sense of Juvenal, yet we give the most considerable part of it: We give it, in general, so clearly, that few notes are sufficient to make us intelligible. We make our author at least appear in a poetic dress. We have actually made him more sounding, and more elegant, than he was before in English: and have endeavoured to make him speak that kind of English, which he would have spoken had he lived in England, and had written to this age. If sometimes any of us (and it is but seldom) make him express the customs and manners of our native country, rather than of Rome; it is, either when there was some kind of analogy, betwixt their customs and ours; or when, to make him more easy to our understandings, we give him those manners which are familiar to us. But I defend not this innovation, it is enough if I can excuse it. For to speak sincerely, the manners of nations and ages are not to be confounded: we should either make them English, or leave them Roman. If this can neither be

defended, nor excused, let it be pardoned, at least, because it is acknowledged; and so much the more easily, as being a fault which is never committed without some pleasure to the reader.

Thus, my lord, having troubled you with a tedious visit, the best manners will be shewn in the least ceremony. I will slip away while your back is turned, and while you are otherwise employed; with great confusion, for having entertained you so long with this discourse; and for having no other recompence to make you, than the worthy labours of my fellow-undertakers in this work, and the thankful acknowledgements, prayers and perpetual good wishes of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged, most humble,

And most obedient servant,

Aug. 18, 1692.

JOHN DRYDEN.

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
ÆNEID of VIRGIL.

ADDRESSED TO THE
EARL of MULGRAVE*.

* Originally prefixed to his translation of the *Æneid*.

OBSEKVATION

FRID OF VIRGIL



Originally printed to his translation of the XII and

To the most Honourable

J O H N,

Lord marquis of NORMANBY, Earl of
MULGRAVE, etc. and knight of the most
noble order of the GARTER.

A Heroic poem, truly such, is undoubtedly
the greatest work which the soul of man
is capable to perform. The design of it
is to form the mind to heroic virtue by example;
it is conveyed in verse, that it may delight, while
it instructs: the action of it is always one, entire,
and great. The least and most trivial episodes, or
under-actions, which are interwoven in it, are parts
either necessary, or convenient to carry on the main
design. Either so necessary, that without them the
poem must be imperfect, or so convenient, that no
others can be imagined more suitable to the place in
which they are. There is nothing to be left void in
a firm building; even the cavities ought not to be fil-
led with rubbish, which is of a perishable kind, de-
structive to the strength: but with brick or stone,
though of less pieces, yet of the same nature, and
fitted to the crannies. Even the least portions of
them must be of the epic kind; all things must be
grave, majestical, and sublime: nothing of a foreign
nature, like the trifling novels, which Ariosto and

others have inserted in their poems. By which the reader is mis-led into another sort of pleasure, opposite to that which is designed in an epic poem. One raises the soul and hardens it to virtue, the other softens it again and unbends it into vice. One conduces to the poet's aim, the completing of his work; which he is driving on, labouring and hastening in every line: the other slackens his pace, diverts him from his way, and locks him up like a knight errant in an enchanted castle, when he should be pursuing his first adventure. Statius, as Bossh has well observed, was ambitious of trying his strength, with his master Virgil, as Virgil had before tried his with Homer. The Grecian gave the two Romans an example, in the games which were celebrated at the funerals of Patroclus. Virgil imitated the invention of Homer, but changed the sports. But both the Greek and Latin poet took their occasions from the subject; though to confess the truth, they were both ornamental, or at best, convenient parts of it, rather than of necessity arising from it. Statius, who, through his whole poem, is noted for want of conduct and judgment; instead of staying, as he might have done, for the death of Capaneus, Hippomedon, Tydeus, or some other of his seven champions, (who are heroes all alike) or more properly for the tragical end of the two brothers, whose exequies the next successor had leisure to perform, when the siege was raised, and in the interval betwixt the poet's first action, and his second; went out of his way, as it were on propense malice to commit a fault. For he took his opportunity to kill a royal infant, by the means of a serpent, (that author of all evil) to make way for those funeral honours, which he intended for him. Now if this innocent had been of any relation to his Thebais; if he had either furthered or

hindered the taking of the town, the poet might have found some sorry excuse at least, for detaining the reader from the promised siege. On these terms, this Capaneus of a poet engaged his two immortal predecessors, and his success was answerable to his enterprise.

If this oeconomy must be observed in the minutest parts of an epic poem, which, to a common reader, seem to be detached from the body, and almost independent of it; what soul, though sent into the world with great advantages of nature, cultivated with the liberal arts and sciences, conversant with histories of the dead, and enriched with observations on the living, can be sufficient to inform the whole body of so great a work? I touch here but transiently, without any strict method, on some few of those many rules of imitating nature, which Aristotle drew from Homer's Iliads, and Odyssees, and which he fitted to the drama; furnishing himself also with observations from the practice of the theatre, when it flourished under Æschilus, Euripides, and Sophocles. For the original of the stage was from the epic poem. Narration, doubtless, preceded acting, and gave laws to it: what at first was told artfully, was, in process of time, represented gracefully to the sight, and hearing. Those episodes of Homer, which were proper for the stage, the poets amplified each into an action: out of his limbs they formed their bodies: what he had contracted they enlarged: out of one Hercules were made infinity of pygmies; yet all endued with human souls: for from him, their great creator, they have each of them the *Divinae particulam auræ*. They flowed from him at first, and are at last resolved into him. Nor were they only animated by him, but their measure and symmetry was owing to him.

His one, entire, and great action was copied by them according to the proportions of the drama : if he finished his orb within the year, it sufficed to teach them, that their action being less, and being also less diversified with incidents, their orb, of consequence, must be circumscribed in a less compass, which they reduced, within the limits either of a natural or an artificial day. So that as he taught them to amplify what he had shortened, by the same rule applied the contrary way, he taught them to shorten what he had amplified. Tragedy is the miniature of human life; an epic poem is the draught at length. Here, my lord, I must contract also, for, before I was aware, I was almost running into a long digression, to prove that there is no such absolute necessity that the time of a stage-action should so strictly be confined to twenty four hours, as never to exceed them, for which Aristotle contends, and the Grecian stage has practised. Some longer space, on some occasions, I think may be allowed, especially for the English theatre, which requires more variety of incidents than the French. Corneille himself, after long practice, was inclined to think, that the time allotted by the ancients was too short to raise and finish a great action : and better a mechanic rule were stretched or broken, than a great beauty were omitted. To raise, and afterwards to calm the passions, to purge the soul from pride, by the examples of human miseries, which befall the greatest; in few words, to expel arrogance, and introduce compassion, are the great effects of tragedy. Great, I must confess, if they were altogether as true as they are pompous. But are habits to be introduced at three hours warning? Are radical diseases so suddenly removed? A mountebank may promise such a cure, but a skillful physician will not undertake it. An epic poem is not so

much in haste; it works leisurely; the changes which it makes are slow; but the cure is likely to be more perfect. The effects of tragedy, as I said, are too violent to be lasting. If it be answered, that for this reason tragedies are often to be seen, and the dose to be repeated; this is tacitely to confess, that there is more virtue in one heroic poem, than in many tragedies. A man is humbled one day, and his pride returns the next; chymical medicines are observed to relieve oftener than to cure: for it is the nature of spirits to make swift impressions, but not deep. Gale-nical decoctions, to which I may properly compare an epic poem, have more of body in them; they work by their substance and their weight. It is one reason of Aristotle's to prove, that tragedy is the more noble, because it turns in a shorter compass; the whole action being circumscribed within the space of four-and-twenty hours. He might prove as well that a mushroom is to be preferred before a peach, because it shoots up in the compass of a night. A chariot may be driven round the pillar in less space than a large machine, because the bulk is not so great: Is the Moon a more noble planet than Saturn, because she makes her revolution in less than thirty days, and he in little less than thirty years? Both their orbs are in proportion to their several magnitudes; and, consequently, the quickness or slowness of their motion, and the time of their circumvolutions, is no argument of the greater or less perfection. And besides, what virtue is there in a tragedy, which is not contained in an epic poem? where pride is humbled, virtue rewarded, and vice punished; and those more amply treated, than the narrowness of the drama can admit. The shining quality of an epic hero, his magnanimity, his con-

stancy, his patience, his piety, or whatever characteristical virtue his poet gives him, raises first our admiration: we are naturally prone to imitate what we admire; and frequent acts produce a habit. If the hero's chief quality be vicious, as for example, the choler and obstinate desire of vengeance in Achilles, yet the moral is instructive: And besides, we are informed in the very proposition of the *Iliads*, that this anger was pernicious; that it brought a thousand ills on the Grecian camp. The courage of Achilles is proposed to imitation, not his pride and disobedience to his general, nor his brutal cruelty to his dead enemy, nor the selling his body to his father. We abhor these actions while we read them, and what we abhor we never imitate: the poet only shews them like rocks or quick-sands, to be shunned.

By this example, the critics have concluded that it is not necessary the manners of the hero should be virtuous. They are poetically good if they are of a piece. Though where a character of perfect virtue is set before us, it is more lovely: for there the whole hero is to be imitated. This is the *Æneas* of our author: this is that idea of perfection in an epic poem, which painters and statuaries have only in their minds; and which no hands are able to express: These are the beauties of a god in a human body. When the picture of Achilles is drawn in tragedy, he is taken with those warts, and moles, and hard features, by those who represent him on the stage, or he is no more Achilles: for his creator Homer has so described him. Yet even thus he appears a perfect hero, though an imperfect character of virtue. Horace paints him after Homer, and delivers him to be copied on the stage with all those imperfections. Therefore, they are either not faults in a heroic poem, or faults common to the drama. After all, on

the whole merits of the cause, it must be acknowledged that the epic poem is more for the manners, and tragedy for the passions. The passions, as I have said, are violent: and acute distempers require medicines of a strong and speedy operation. Ill habits of the mind are like chronical diseases, to be corrected by degrees, and cured by alteratives: wherein though purges are sometimes necessary, yet diet, good air, and moderate exercise, have the greatest part. The matter being thus stated, it will appear that both sorts of poetry are of use for their proper ends. The stage is more active, the epic poem works at greater leisure, yet is acted too, when need requires. For dialogue is imitated by the drama, from the more active parts of it. One puts off a fit like the *Quinquina*, and relieves us only for a time; the other roots out the distemper, and gives a healthful habit. The sun enlightens and cheers us, dispels fogs, and warms the ground with his daily beams; but the corn is sowed, increases, is ripened, and is reaped for use in process of time, and in its proper season. I proceed from the greatness of the action, to the dignity of the actors, I mean to the persons employed in both poems. There likewise tragedy will be seen to borrow from the Epopee; and that which borrows is always of less dignity, because it has not of its own. A subject, it is true, may lend to his sovereign, but the act of borrowing makes the king inferior, because he wants, and the subject supplies. And suppose the persons of the drama wholly fabulous, or of the poet's invention, yet heroic poetry gave him the examples of that invention, because it was first, and Homer the common father of the stage. I know not of any one advantage, which tragedy can boast above heroic poetry, but that it is represented to the view, as well as read:

and instructs in the closet, as well as on the theatre. This is an uncontended excellence, and a chief branch of its prerogative; yet I may be allowed to say without partiality, that herein the actors share the poet's praise. Your lordship knows some modern tragedies which are beautiful on the stage, and yet I am confident you would not read them. Tryphon the stationer complains they are seldom asked for in his shop. The poet who flourished in the scene, is damned in the Ruelle; nay, more, he is not esteemed a good poet by those who see and hear his extravagancies with delight. They are a sort of stately fustian, and lofty childishness. Nothing but nature can give a sincere pleasure; where that is not imitated, it is grotesque painting, the fine woman ends in a fish's tail.

I might also add, that many things, which not only please, but are real beauties in the reading, would appear absurd upon the stage: and those not only the *Speciosa Miracula*, as Horace calls them, of transformations, of Scylla, Antiphanes, and the Lestrigons, which cannot be represented even in Operas; but the prowess of Achilles, or Æneas, would appear ridiculous in our dwarf-heroes of the theatre. We can believe they routed armies in Homer, or in Virgil; but *ne Hercules contra duos* in the drama. I forbear to instance in many things, which the stage cannot, or ought not to represent. For I have said already more than I intended on this subject, and should fear it might be turned against me; that I plead for the pre-eminence of epic poetry, because I have taken some pains in translating Virgil; if this were the first time that I had delivered my opinion in this dispute. But I have more than once already maintained the rights of my two masters against their rivals of the scene, even while I wrote tragedies my-

self, and had no thoughts of this present undertaking. I submit my opinion to your judgment, who are better qualified than any man I know to decide this controversy. You come, my lord, instructed in the cause, and needed not that I should open it. Your Essay of Poetry, which was published without a name, and of which I was not honoured with the confidence, I read over and over with much delight, and as much instruction; and, without flattering you, or making myself more moral than I am, not without some envy. I was loath to be informed how an epic poem should be written, or how a tragedy should be contrived and managed, in better verse, and with more judgment, than I could teach others. A native of Parnassus, and bred up in the studies of its fundamental laws, may receive new lights from his contemporaries; but it is a grudging kind of praise which he gives his benefactors. He is more obliged, than he is willing to acknowledge: there is a tincture of malice in his commendations. For where I own I am taught, I confess my want of knowledge. A judge upon the bench, may, out of good-nature, or at least interest, encourage the pleadings of a puny counsellor; but he does not willingly commend his brother serjeant at the bar; especially when he controuls his law, and exposes that ignorance which is made sacred by his place. I gave the unknown author his due commendation, I must confess; but who can answer for me, and for the rest of the poets, who heard me read the poem, whether we should not have been better pleased, to have seen our own names at the bottom of the title-page? Perhaps we commended it the more, that we might seem to be above the censure. We are naturally displeased with an unknown critic; as the ladies are with a lampooner; because we are bitten in the dark,

and know not where to fasten our revenge. But great excellencies will work their way through all sorts of opposition. I applauded rather out of decency, than affection; and was ambitious, as some yet can witness, to be acquainted with a man, with whom I had the honour to converse, and that almost daily, for so many years together. Heaven knows, if I have heartily forgiven you this deceit. You extorted a praise, which I should willingly have given, had I known you. Nothing had been more easy, than to commend a patron of a long standing. The world would join with me, if the *encomiums* were just; and if unjust, would excuse a grateful flatterer. But to come anonymous upon me, and force me to commend you against my interest, was not altogether so fair, give me leave to say, as it was politic. For by concealing your quality, you might clearly understand how your work succeeded; and that the general approbation was given to your merit, not your titles. Thus like Apelles you stood unseen behind your own Venus, and received the praises of the passing multitude: the work was commended, not the author: And I doubt not, this was one of the most pleasing adventures of your life.

I have detained your lordship longer than I intended in this dispute of preference betwixt the epic poem, and the drama: and yet have not formally answered any of the arguments which are brought by Aristotle on the other side, and set in the fairest light by Dacier. But I suppose, without looking on the book, I may have touched on some of the objections. For in this address to your lordship, I design not a treatise of heroic poetry, but write in a loose epistolary way, somewhat tending to that subject, after the example of Horace, in his first epistle of the second book to Augustus Caesar, and of that to

the Pisos, which we call his Art of Poetry. In both of which he observes no method that I can trace, whatever Scaliger the father, or Heinſius, may have ſeen, or rather think they had ſeen. I have taken up, laid down, and reſumed as often as I pleaſed the ſame ſubject: and this looſe proceeding I ſhall uſe through all this prefatory dedication. Yet all this while I have been ſailing with ſome ſide-wind or other toward the point I propoſed in the beginning; the greatneſs and excellency of an heroic poem, with ſome of the difficulties which attend that work. The compariſon therefore which I made betwixt the Epopee and the Tragedy, was not altogether a digreſſion; for it is concluded on all hands, that they are both the maſter-pieces of human wit.

In the mean time, I may be bold to draw this corollary from what has been already ſaid, That the file of heroic poets is very ſhort: all are not ſuch who have aſſumed that lofty title in ancient or modern ages, or have been ſo eſteemed by their partial and ignorant admirers.

There have been but one great Ilias, and one Æneis, in ſo many ages. The next, but the next with a long interval betwixt, was the Jeruſalem: I mean not ſo much in diſtance of time, as in excellency. After theſe three are entered, ſome lord chamberlain ſhould be appointed, ſome critic of authority ſhould be ſet before the door, to keep out a croud of little poets, who preſs for admiſſion, and are not of quality. Maevius would be deafening your lordſhip's ears, with his

Fortunam Priami cantabo, et Nobile Bellum.

Mere ſuſtian, as Horace would tell you from behind, without preſſing forward, and more ſmoak than fire. Pulci, Boyardo, and Arioſto, would cry out, Make

room for the Italian poets, the descendants of Virgil in a right-line. Father Le moine, with his saint Louis; and Scudery with his Alaric, for a godly king, and a Gothic conqueror; and Chapelain would take it ill that his maid should be refused a place with Helen and Lavinia. Spenser has a better plea for his Fairy Queen, had his action been finished, or had been one. And Milton, if the devil had not been his hero instead of Adam; if the giant had not foiled the knight, and driven him out of his strong hold, to wander through the world with his lady errant; and if there had not been more machining persons than human, in his poem. After these, the rest of our English poets shall not be mentioned. I have that honour for them which I ought to have; but if they are worthies, they are not to be ranked amongst the three whom I have named, and who are established in their reputation.

Before I quitted the comparison betwixt epic poetry and tragedy, I should have acquainted my judge with one advantage of the former over the latter, which I now casually remember out of the preface of Segrais before his translation of the *Æneis*, or out of Bossu, no matter which. The stile of the heroic poem is, and ought to be, more lofty than that of the drama. The critic is certainly in the right, for the reason already urged: the work of tragedy is on the passions, and in dialogue, both of them abhor strong metaphors, in which the *Epopée* delights. A poet cannot speak too plainly on the stage: for *volat irrevocabile verbum*; the sense is lost, if it be not taken flying; but what we read alone, we have leisure to digest. There an author may beautify his sense by the boldness of his expression, which, if we understand not fully at the first, we may dwell upon it, till we find the secret force and excellence. That

which cures the manners by alterative physic, as I said before, must proceed by insensible degrees; but that which purges the passions, must do its business all at once, or wholly fail of its effect, at least in the present operation, and without repeated doses. We must beat the iron while it is hot, but we may polish it at leisure. Thus, my lord, you pay the fine of my forgetfulness, and yet the merits of both causes are where they were, and undecided, till you declare whether it be more for the benefit of mankind to have their manners in general corrected, or their pride and hard-heartedness removed.

I must now come closer to my present business; and not think of making more invasive wars abroad, when, like Hannibal, I am called back to the defence of my own country. Virgil is attacked by many enemies: he has a whole confederacy against him, and I must endeavour to defend him as well as I am able. But their principal objections being against his moral, the duration or length of time taken up in the action of the poem, and what they have to urge against the manners of his hero, I shall omit the rest as mere cavils of grammarians; at the worst but casual slips of a great man's pen, or inconsiderable faults of an admirable poem, which the author had not leisure to review before his death. Macrobius has answered what the ancients could urge against him; and some things I have lately read in Tanneau, le Fevre, Valois, and another whom I name not, which are scarce worth answering. They begin with the moral of his poem, which I have elsewhere confessed, and still must own, not to be so noble as that of Homer. But let both be fairly stated, and, without contradicting my first opinion, I can shew that Virgil's was as useful to the Romans of his age, as Homer's was to the Grecians of his; in what time soever he

may be supposed to have lived and flourished. Homer's moral was to urge the necessity of union, and of a good understanding betwixt confederate states and princes engaged in a war with a mighty monarch; as also of discipline in an army, and obedience in their several chiefs, to the supreme commander of the joint forces. To inculcate this, he sets forth the ruinous effects of discord in the camp of those allies, occasioned by the quarrel betwixt the general, and one of the next in office under him. Agamemnon gives the provocation, and Achilles resents the injury. Both parties are faulty in the quarrel, and accordingly they are both punished: the aggressor is forced to sue for peace to his inferior on dishonourable conditions; the deserter refuses the satisfaction offered, and his obstinacy costs him his best friend. This works the natural effect of choler, and turns his rage against him, by whom he was last affronted, and most sensibly. The greater anger expels the less; but his character is still preserved. In the mean time, the Grecian army receives loss on loss, and is half destroyed by a pestilence into the bargain.

Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

As the poet, in the first part of the example, had shewn the bad effects of discord, so after the reconciliation, he gives the good effects of unity. For Hector is slain, and then Troy must fall. By this, it is probable, that Homer lived when the Median monarchy was grown formidable to the Grecians; and that the joint endeavours of his countrymen, were little enough to preserve their common freedom from an encroaching enemy. Such was his moral, which all critics have allowed to be more noble than that of Virgil; though not adapted to the

times in which the Roman poet lived. Had Virgil flourished in the age of Ennius, and addressed to Scipio, he had probably taken the same moral, or some other not unlike it. For then the Romans were in as much danger from the Carthaginian commonwealth, as the Grecians were from the Assyrian, or Median monarchy. But we are to consider him as writing his poem in a time when the old form of government was subverted, and a new one just established by Octavius Caesar; in effect by force of arms, but seemingly by the consent of the Roman people. The commonwealth had received a deadly wound in the former civil wars betwixt Marius and Sylla. The commons, while the first prevailed, had almost shaken off the yoke of the nobility; and Marius and Cinna, like the captains of the mobb, under the specious pretence of the public good, and of doing justice on the oppressors of their liberty, revenged themselves, without form of law, on their private enemies. Sylla, in his turn, proscribed the heads of the adverse party: he too had nothing but liberty and reformation in his mouth; (for the cause of religion is but a modern motive to rebellion, invented by the christian priest-hood, refining on the heathen:) Sylla, to be sure, meant no more good to the Roman people than Marius before, whatever he declared; but sacrificed the lives, and took the estates of all his enemies, to gratify those who brought him into power: such was the reformation of the government by both parties. The senate and the commons were the two bases on which it stood; and the two champions of either faction, each destroyed the foundations of the other side; so the fabric of consequence must fall betwixt them; and tyranny must be built upon their ruins. This comes of altering fundamental laws and constitutions. Like him, who,

being, in good health, lodged himself in a physician's house, and was over-persuaded by his landlord to take physic, of which he died, for the benefit of his doctor: *Stava ben* (was written on his monument) *ma, perstar meglio, sto qui.*

After the death of those two usurpers, the commonwealth seemed to recover, and held up its head for a little time. But it was all the while in a deep consumption, which is a flattering disease. Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar, had found the sweets of arbitrary power: and each being a check to the other's growth, struck up a false friendship amongst themselves, and divided the government betwixt them, which none of them was able to assume alone. These were the public-spirited men of their age, that is, patriots of their own interest. The commonwealth looked with a florid countenance in their management, spread in bulk, and all the while was wasting in the vitals. Not to trouble your lordship with the repetition of what you know: after the death of Crassus, Pompey found himself out-witted by Caesar; broke with him, over-powered him in the senate, and caused many unjust decrees to pass against him: Caesar thus injured, and unable to resist the faction of the nobles, which was now uppermost (for he was a Marian) had recourse to arms; and his cause was just against Pompey, but not against his country, whose constitution ought to have been sacred to him, and never to have been violated on the account of any private wrong. But he prevailed, and heaven declaring for him, he became a providential monarch, under the title of Perpetual Dictator. He being murdered by his own son, whom I neither dare commend, nor can justly blame, (though Dante, in his *Inferno*, has put him and Cassius, and Judas Iscariot betwixt them, into the great devil's mouth) the

commonwealth popped up its head for the third time under Brutus and Cassius; and then sunk for ever.

Thus the Roman people were grossly galled, twice or thrice over; and as often enslaved in one century, and under the same pretence of reformation. At last the two battles of Philippi gave the decisive stroke against liberty; and not long after, the commonwealth was turned into a monarchy, by the conduct and good fortune of Augustus. It is true, that the despotic power could not have fallen into better hands, than those of the first and second Cæsar. Your lordship well knows what obligations Virgil had to the latter of them: He saw, beside, that the commonwealth was lost without resource: the heads of it destroyed; the senate new moulded, grown degenerate; and either bought off, or thrusting their own necks into the yoke, out of fear of being forced. Yet I may safely affirm for our great author, (as men of good sense are generally honest) that he was still of republican principles in his heart.

Secretisque piis, his dantem jura Catonem.

I think, I need use no other argument to justify my opinion, than that of this one line, taken from the eighth book of the Æneis. If he had not well studied his patron's temper, it might have ruined him with another prince. But Augustus was not discontented, at least that we can find, that Cato was placed, by his own poet, in Elisium; and there giving laws to the holy souls, who deserved to be separated from the vulgar sort of good spirits. For his conscience could not but whisper to the arbitrary monarch, that the kings of Rome were at first elective, and governed not without a senate: that Romulus was no hereditary prince, and though, after his death, he received divine honours, for the good he did on

earth, yet he was but a god of their own making: that the last Tarquin was expelled justly for over-acts of tyranny, and male-administration; for such are the conditions of an elective kingdom: and I meddle not with others: being, for my own opinion, of Montaign's principles; That an honest man ought to be contented with that form of government, and with those fundamental constitutions of it, which he received from his ancestors, and under which himself was born. Though at the same time he confessed freely, that if he could have chosen his place of birth, it should have been at Venice: Which, for many reasons, I dislike, and am better pleased to have been born an English man.

But to return from my long rambling: I say that Virgil having maturely weighed the condition of the times in which he lived: that an entire liberty was not to be retrieved: that the present settlement had the prospect of a long continuance in the same family, or those adapted into it: that he held his paternal estate from the bounty of the conqueror, by whom he was likewise enriched, esteemed, and cherished: that this conqueror, though of a bad kind, was the very best of it: that the arts of peace flourished under him: that all men might be happy, if they would be quiet: that now he was in possession of the whole, yet he shared a great part of his authority with the senate: that he would be chosen into the ancient offices of the commonwealth, and ruled by the power which he derived from them; and prorogued his government from time to time: Still, as it were, threatening to dismiss himself from public cares, which he exercised more for the common good, than for any delight he took in greatness: These things, I say, being considered by the poet, he concluded it to be the interest of his country to be so governed: to infuse

an awful respect into the people towards such a prince: by that respect to confirm their obedience to him; and by that obedience to make them happy. This was the moral of his divine poem: honest in the poet: honourable to the emperor, whom he derives from a divine extraction; and reflecting part of that honour on the Roman people, whom he derives also from the Trojans; and not only profitable, but necessary to the present age; and likely to be such to their posterity. That it was the received opinion, That the Romans were descended from the Trojans, and Julius Caesar from Iulus the son of Æneas, was enough for Virgil; though perhaps he thought not so himself: or that Æneas ever was in Italy, which Bochartus manifestly proves. And Homer, where he says that Jupiter hated the house of Priam, and was resolved to transfer the kingdom to the family of Æneas, yet mentions nothing of his leading a colony into a foreign country, and settling there: but that the Romans valued themselves on their Trojan ancestry, is so undoubted a truth, that I need not prove it. Even the seals which we have remaining of Julius Caesar, which we know to be antic, have the star of Venus over them, though they were all given after his death, as a note that he was deified. I doubt not but one reason, why Augustus should be so passionately concerned for the preservation of the Æneis, which its author had condemned to be burnt, as an imperfect poem, by his last will and testament, was, because it did him a real service, as well as an honour; that a work should not be lost, where his divine original was celebrated in verse, which had the character of immortality stamped upon it.

Neither were the great Roman families which flourished in his time, less obliged by him than the emperor. Your lordship knows with what address

he makes mention of them; as captains of ships, or leaders in the war; and even some of Italian extraction are not forgotten. These are the single stars which are sprinkled through the *Æneis*: but there are whole constellations of them in the fifth book. And I could not but take notice, when I translated it, of some favourite families to which he gives the victory, and awards the prizes, in the person of his heroes, at the funeral games which were celebrated in honour of Anchises: I insist not on their names; but am pleased to find the Memmii amongst them, derived from Mnestheus, because Lucretius dedicates to one of that family, a branch of which destroyed Corinth. I likewise either found or formed an image to myself of the contrary kind; that those, who lost the prizes, were such as disoblige the poet, or were in disgrace with Augustus, or enemies to Maecenas: and this was the poetical revenge he took. For *genus irritabile vatum*, as Horace says. When a poet is thoroughly provoked, he will do himself justice, however dear it cost him, *Animamque in vulnere ponit*. I think these are not bare imaginations of my own, though I find no trace of them in the commentators: but one poet may judge of another, by himself. The vengeance we defer, is not forgotten. I hinted before, that the whole Roman people were obliged by Virgil, in deriving them from Troy; an ancestry which they affected. We, and the French, are of the same humor: they would be thought to descend from a son, I think, of Hector: and we would have our Britain both named and planted by a descendant of Æneas. Spenser favours this opinion what he can. His prince Arthur, or whoever he intends by him, is a Trojan. Thus the hero of Homer was a Grecian, of Virgil a Roman, of Tasso an Italian.

I have transgressed my bounds, and gone farther than the moral led me. But if your lordship is not tired, I am safe enough.

Thus far, I think, my author is defended. But as Augustus is still shadowed in the person of *Aeneas*, of which I shall say more, when I come to the manners which the poet gives his hero, I must prepare that subject, by shewing how dexterously he managed both the prince and people, so as to displease neither, and to do good to both; which is the part of a wise and an honest man; and proves, that it is possible for a courtier not to be a knave. I shall continue still to speak my thoughts like a free born subject, as I am; though such things, perhaps, as no Dutch commentator could, and I am sure no Frenchman durst. I have already told your lordship my opinion of Virgil; that he was no arbitrary man: obliged he was to his master for his bounty, and he repays him with good counsel, how to behave himself in his new monarchy, so as to gain the affections of his subjects, and deserve to be called the father of his country. From this consideration it is, that he chose the ground-work of his poem, one empire destroyed, and another raised from the ruins of it. This was the just parallel. *Aeneas* could not pretend to be *Priam's* heir in a lineal succession: for *Anchises*, the hero's father, was only of the second branch of the royal family; and *Helenus*, a son of *Priam*, was yet surviving, and might lawfully claim before him. It may be, Virgil mentions him on that account. Neither has he forgotten *Priamus*, in the fifth of his *Aeneis*, the son of *Polites*, youngest son to *Priam*; who was slain by *Pyrrhus*, in the second book. *Aeneas* had only married *Creusa*, *Priam's* daughter, and by her could have no title, while any

of the male issue were remaining. In this case, the poet gave him the next title, which is that of an elective king. The remaining Trojans chose him to lead them forth, and settle them in some foreign country. Ilioneus, in his speech to Dido, calls him expressly by the name of king. Our poet, who all this while had Augustus in his eye, had no desire he should seem to succeed by any right of inheritance, derived from Julius Caesar; such a title being but one degree removed from conquest. For what was introduced by force, by force may be removed. It was better for the people that they should give, than he should take. Since that gift was indeed no more at bottom, than a trust, Virgil gives us an example of this, in the person of Mezentius. He governed arbitrarily, he was expelled; and came to the deserved end of all tyrants. Our author shews us another sort of kingship, in the person of Latinus: he was descended from Saturn, and, as I remember, in the third degree. He is described a just and gracious prince; solicitous for the welfare of his people; always consulting with his senate, to promote the common good, we find him at the head of them, when he enters into the council-hall. Speaking first, but still demanding their advice, and steering by it, as far as the iniquity of the times would suffer him: And this is the proper character of a king by inheritance, who is born a father of his country. Æneas, though he married the heiress of the crown, yet claimed no title to it during the life of his father-in-law.

————— *Pater arma Latinus habeto, etc.*

are Virgil's words. As for himself, he was contented to take care of his country gods, who were not those of Latium. Wherein our divine author

seems to relate to the after-practice of the Romans, which was to adopt the gods of those they conquered, or received as members of their commonwealth. Yet withal, he plainly touches at the office of the high-priesthood, with which Augustus was invested; and which made his person more sacred and inviolable, than even the tribunitial power. It was not therefore for nothing, that the most judicious of all poets made that office vacant, by the death of Pantheus, in the second book of the Æneis, for his hero to succeed in it; and consequently for Augustus to enjoy. I know not that any of the commentators have taken notice of that passage. If they have not, I am sure they ought: and if they have, I am not indebted to them for the observation; the words of Virgil are very plain,

Sacra, suosque tibi commendat Troja penates.

As for Augustus, or his uncle Julius, claiming by descent from Æneas; that title is already out of doors. Æneas succeeded not, but was elected. Troy was fore-doomed to fail for ever.

*Postquam res Aside, Priamique evertere regnum,
Immeritum visum superis,—Æneis, lib. III. v. 1.*

Augustus, it is true, had once resolved to rebuild that city, and there to make the seat of empire: but Horace writes an ode on purpose to deter him from that thought; declaring the place to be accursed, and that the gods would as often destroy it, as it should be raised. Herupon the emperor laid aside a project so ungrateful to the Roman people. But by this, my lord, we may conclude that he had still his pedigree in his head; and had an itch of being

thought a divine king, if his poets had not given him better counsel.

I will pass by many less material objections, for want of room to answer them: what follows next is of great importance, if the critics can make out their charge: for it is levelled at the manners which our poet gives his hero, and which are the same which were eminently seen in his Augustus. Those manners were, piety to the gods, and a dutiful affection to his father; love to his relations; care of his people; courage and conduct in the wars; gratitude to those who had obliged him; and justice in general to mankind.

Piety, as your lordship sees, takes place of all, as the chief part of his character: and the word in Latin is more full than it can possibly be expressed in any modern language; for there it comprehends not only devotion to the gods, but filial love and tender affection to relations of all sorts. As instances of this, the deities of Troy, and his own Penates, are made the companions of his flight: they appear to him in his voyage, and advise him; and at last he replaces them in Italy, their native country. For his father, he takes him on his back; he leads his little son, his wife follows him; but losing his footsteps, through fear or ignorance, he goes back into the midst of his enemies to find her; and leaves not his pursuit till her ghost appears, to forbid his farther search. I will say nothing of his duty to his father while he lived, his sorrow for his death; of the games instituted in honour of his memory; or seeking him, by his command, even after his death, in the Elysian fields. I will not mention his tenderness for his son, which every where is visible: of his raising a tomb for Polydorus, the obsequies for Misenus, his pious remembrance of Deiphobus; the fu-

nerals of his nurse; his grief for Pallas, and his revenge taken on his murderer, whom otherwise, by his natural compassion, he had forgiven; and then the poem had been left imperfect; for we could have had no certain prospect of his happiness, while the last obstacle to it was unremoved. Of the other parts which compose his character, as a king, or as a general, I need say nothing; the whole Æneis is one continued instance, of some one or other of them; and where I find any thing of them taxed, it shall suffice me, as briefly as I can, to vindicate my divine master to your lordship, and by you to the reader. But herein, Segrais, in his admirable preface to his translation of the Æneis, as the author of the Dauphin's Virgil justly calls it, has prevented me. Him I follow, and what I borrow from him, am ready to acknowledge to him. For, impartially speaking, the French are as much better critics than the English, as they are worse poets. Thus we generally allow, that they better understand the management of a war, than our islanders; but we know we are superior to them in the day of battle. They value themselves on their generals, we on our soldiers. But this is not the proper place to decide that question, if they make it one. I shall perhaps say as much of other nations, and their poets, excepting only Tasso; and hope to make my assertion good, which is but doing justice to my country; part of which honour will reflect on your lordship, whose thoughts are always just; your numbers harmonious, your words chosen, your expressions strong and manly, your verse flowing, and your turns as happy as they are easy. If you would set us more copies, your example would make all precepts needless. In the mean time, that little you have written is owned;

and that particularly by the poets, (who are a nation not over-lavish of praise to their contemporaries) as a principal ornament of our language: but the sweetest essences are always confined in the smallest glasses.

When I speak of your lordship, it is never a digression, and therefore, I need beg no pardon for it; but take up Segrais where I left him, and shall use him less often than I have occasion for him. For his preface is a perfect piece of criticism, full and clear, and digested, into an exact method; mine is loose, and, as I intended it, epistolary. Yet I dwell on many things, which he durst not touch: for it is dangerous to offend an arbitrary master; and every patron who has the power of Augustus, has not his clemency. In short, my lord, I would not translate him, because I would bring you somewhat of my own. His notes and observations on every book are of the same excellency; and for the same reason I omit the greater part.

He takes no notice that Virgil is arraigned, for placing piety before valour; and making that piety the chief character of his hero. I have already said from Bossu, that a poet is not obliged to make his hero a virtuous man: Therefore, neither Homer nor Tasso are to be blamed, for giving what predominant quality they pleased to their first character. But Virgil, who designed to form a perfect prince, and would insinuate, that Augustus, whom he calls Æneas in his poem, was truly such, found himself obliged to make him without blemish; thoroughly virtuous: and a thorough virtue both begins and ends in piety. Tasso, without question, observed this before me; and therefore split his hero in two: he gave Godfrey piety, and Rinaldo fortitude, for their chief qualities or manners. Homer, who had

chose another moral, makes both Agamemnon and Achilles vicious; for his design was, to instruct in virtue, by shewing the deformity of vice. I avoid repetition of what I have said above. What follows, is translated literally from Segrais.

Virgil had considered, that the greatest virtues of Augustus consisted in the perfect art of governing his people; which caused him to reign above forty years in great felicity. He considered that his emperor was valiant, civil, popular, eloquent, politic, and religious; he has given all these qualities to Æneas. But knowing that piety alone comprehends the whole duty of man towards the gods, towards his country, and towards his relations; he judged, that this ought to be his first character, whom he would set for a pattern of perfection. In reality, they who believe that the praises, which arise from valour, are superior to those which proceed from any other virtues, have not considered (as they ought) that valour, destitute of other virtues, cannot render a man worthy of any true esteem. That quality, which signifies no more than an intrepid courage, may be separated from many others which are good, and accompanied with many which are ill. A man may be very valiant, and yet impious and vicious. But the same cannot be said of piety, which excludes all ill qualities, and comprehends even valour itself, with all other qualities which are good. Can we, for example, give the praise of valour to a man who should see his gods profaned, and should want the courage to defend them? To a man who should abandon his father, or desert his king in his last necessity?

Thus far Segrais, in giving the preference to piety, before valour. I will now follow him, where

he considers this valour, or intrepid courage, singly in itself; and this also Virgil gives to his Aeneas, and that in a heroical degree.

Having first concluded, that our poet did for the best in taking the first character of his hero, from that essential virtue on which the rest depend, he proceeds to tell us, that in the ten years war of Troy, he was considered as the second champion of his country; allowing Hector the first place; and this, even by the confession of Homer, who took all occasions of setting up his own countrymen, the Grecians, and of undervaluing the Trojan chiefs. But Virgil, (whom Segravis forgot to cite) makes Diomedes give him a higher character for strength and courage. His testimony is this, in the eleventh book:

*Stetimus tela aspera contra,
Contulimusque manus; experto credite, quantus
In clypeum assurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam.
Si duo praeterea tales Idaea tulisset
Terra viros; ultro Inachias venisset ad urbes
Dardanus, et versis iugaret Graecia fatis.
Quicquid apud duras cessatum est moenia Trojae,
Hectoris, Aeneaeque manu victoria Grajam.
Haesit; et in decumum vestigia retulit annum.
Ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis:
Hic pietate prior.*

I give not here my translation of these verses; though I think I have not ill succeeded in them; because your lordship is so great a master of the original, that I have no reason to desire you should see Virgil and me so near together. But you may please, my lord, to take notice, that the Latin author resines upon the Greek, and insinuates, that Homer had done his hero wrong, in giving the advantage of the duel to his own countryman; though Dio-

medes was manifestly the second champion of the Grecians: and Ulysses preferred him before Ajax, when he chose him for the companion of his nightly expedition; for he had a head-piece of his own; and wanted only the fortitude of another, to bring him off with safety; and that he might compass his design with honour.

The French translator thus proceeds. They, who accuse Æneas for want of courage, either understand not Virgil, or have read him slightly; otherwise they would not raise an objection so easy to be answered. Hereupon he gives so many instances of the hero's valour, that to repeat them after him, would tire your lordship, and put me to the unnecessary trouble of transcribing the greatest part of the three last Æneids. In short, more could not be expected from an Amadis, a Sir Lancelot, or the whole Round-Table, than he performs. *Proxima quæque metis gladio*, is the perfect account of a knight-errant. If it be replied, continues Segrais, that it was not difficult for him to undertake and achieve such hardy enterprizes, because he wore enchanted arms; that accusation, in the first place, must fall on Homer, ere it can reach Virgil. Achilles was as well provided with them as Æneas, though he was invulnerable without them: And Aristotle, the two Tassos, Bernardo and Torquato, even our own Spenser; in a word, all modern poets have copied Homer, as well as Virgil; he is neither the first nor last, but in the midst of them; and therefore is safe, if they are so. Who knows, says Segrais, but that his fated armour was only an allegorical defence, and signified no more, than that he was under the peculiar protection of the gods? born, as the astrologers will tell us out of Virgil, (who was

well versed in the Chaldaean mysteries) under the favourable influence of Jupiter, Venus, and the Sun. But I insist not on this, because I know you believe not there is such an art; though not only Horace and Persius, but Augustus himself, thought otherwise. But in defence of Virgil, I dare positively say, that he has been more cautious in this particular, than either his predecessor, or his descendants. For Æneas was actually wounded, in the twelfth of the *Æneis*; though he had the same god-smith to forge his arms, as had Achilles. It seems he was no warluck, as the Scots commonly call such men, who, they say, are iron-free, or lead-free. Yet after this experiment, that his arms were not impenetrable, when he was cured indeed by his mother's help; because he was that day to conclude the war by the death of Turnus, the poet durst not carry the miracle too far, and restore him wholly to his former vigour: he was still too weak to overtake his enemy; yet we see with what courage he attacks Turnus, when he faces, and renews the combat. I need say no more, for Virgil defends himself, without needing my assistance; and proves his hero truly to deserve that name. He was not then a second-rate champion, as they would have him, who think fortitude the first virtue in a hero. But being beaten from this hold, they will not yet allow him to be valiant; because he wept more often, as they think, than well becomes a man of courage.

In the first place, if tears are arguments of cowardise, what shall I say of Homer's hero? Shall Achilles pass for timorous, because he wept, and wept on less occasions than Æneas? Herein Virgil must be granted to have excelled his master. For once both heroes are described, lamenting their lost loves: Briseis was taken away by force from the Grecian;

Creusa was lost for ever to her husband. But Achilles went roring along the salt-sea-shoar, and like a booby, was complaining to his mother, when he should have revenged his injury by his arms. Æneas took a nobler course; for having secured his father and son, he repeated all his former dangers to have found his wife, if she had been above ground. And here your lordship may observe the address of Virgil; it was not for nothing, that this passage was related with all these tender circumstances. Æneas told it; Dido heard it. That he had been so affectionate a husband, was no ill argument to the coming dowager, that he might prove as kind to her. Virgil has a thousand secret beauties, though I have not leisure to remark them.

Segrais, on this subject of a hero's shedding tears, observes that historians commend Alexander for weeping, when he read the mighty actions of Achilles. And Julius Cæsar is likewise praised, when out of the same noble envy, he wept at the victories of Alexander. But if we observe more closely, we shall find, that the tears of Æneas were always on a laudable occasion. Thus he weeps out of compassion, and tenderness of nature, when in the temple of Carthage he beholds the pictures of his friends, who sacrificed their lives in defence of their country. He deplores the lamentable end of his pilot Palinurus; the untimely death of young Pallas his confederate; and the rest, which I omit. Yet even for these tears, his wretched critics dare condemn him. They make Æneas little better than a kind of St. Switheroe, always raining. One of these censors is bold enough to arraign him of cowardise; when in the beginning of the first book, he not only weeps, but trembles at an approaching storm.

Exemplo Æneae solvuntur frigore membra:

Ingemit, et duplices tendens ad sidera palmas, etc.

But to this I have answered formerly; that his fear was not for himself, but for his people. And what can give a sovereign a better commendation, or recommend a hero more to the affection of the reader? They were threatened with a tempest, and he wept; he was promised Italy, and therefore he prayed for the accomplishment of that promise. All this in the beginning of a storm, therefore he shewed the more early piety, and the quicker sense of compassion. Thus much I have urged elsewhere in the defence of Virgil; and since, I have been informed, by Mr. Moyle, a young gentleman, whom I can never sufficiently commend, that the ancients accounted drowning an accursed death. So that if we grant him to have been afraid, he had just occasion for that fear, both in relation to himself, and to his subjects. I think our adversaries can carry this argument no farther, unless they tell us that he ought to have had more confidence in the promise of the gods: but how was he assured that he had understood their oracles aright? Helenus might be mistaken, Phoebus might speak doubtfully, even his mother might flatter him, that he might prosecute his voyage, which if it succeeded happily, he should be the founder of an empire. For that she herself was doubtful of his fortune, is apparent by the address she made to Jupiter on his behalf. To which the god makes answer in these words:

Parce metu, Cytherea, manent immota tuorum

Fata tibi, etc.

Notwithstanding which, the goddess, though comforted, was not assured: for even after this, through

the course of the whole Æneis, she still apprehends the interest which Juno might make with Jupiter against her son. For it was a moot point in heaven, whether he could alter fate, or not. And indeed, some passages in Virgil would make us suspect, that he was of opinion, Jupiter might defer fate, though he could not alter it. For in the latter end of the tenth book, he introduces Juno begging for the life of Turnus, and flattering her husband with the power of changing destiny.

Tua qua potes, orsa reflectas.

To which he graciously answers:

*Si mora præsens leti, tempusque caduco
Oratur juveni, meque hoc ita ponere sentis,
Tolle fuga Turnum, atque instantibus eripe satis.*

Hactenus indulgisse vacat. Sin altior illis

*Sub precibus venia ulla latet, totumque moveri,
Maturave putas bellum, spes postis inaneis.*

But that he could not alter those decrees, the king of gods himself confesses, in the book above cited; when he comforts Hercules, for the death of Pallas, who had invoked his aid, before he threw his lance at Turnus.

Trojae sub moenibus altis,

Tot nati cecidere Deum; quin occidit una

Sarpedon mea progenies: etiam sua Turnum

Fata manent, metasque dati pervenit ad ævi.

Where he plainly acknowledges, that he could not save his own son, or prevent the death which he foresaw. Of his power to defer the blow, I once occasionally discoursed with that excellent person Sir Robert Howard; who is better conversant than any man that I know, in the doctrine of the Stoics,

and he set me right, from the concurrent testimony of philosophers and poets, that Jupiter could not retard the effects of fate, even for a moment. For when I cited Virgil, as favouring the contrary opinion in that verse,

Tolle fuga Turnum, atque instantibus eripe satis.

He replied, and I think with exact judgment, that when Jupiter gave Juno leave to withdraw Turnus from the present danger, it was because he certainly foreknew that his fatal hour was not come: that it was in destiny, for Juno at that time to save him; and that himself obeyed destiny, in giving her that leave.

I need say no more in justification of our hero's courage, and am much deceived, if he ever be attacked on this side of his character again. But he is arraigned with more shew of reason by the ladies; who will make a numerous party against him, for being false to love, in forsaking Dido. And I cannot much blame them; for to say the truth, it is an ill precedent for their gallants to follow. Yet if I can bring him off, with flying colours, they may learn experience at her cost; and for her sake, avoid a cave, as the worst shelter they can chuse from a shower of rain, especially when they have a lover in their company.

In the first place, Segrais observes with much acuteness, that they who blame Æneas for his insensibility of love, when he left Carthage, contradict their former accusation of him, for being always crying, compassionate, and effeminately sensible of those misfortunes which beset others. They give him two contrary characters, but Virgil makes him of a piece, always grateful, always tender-hearted. But they are impudent enough to discharge themselves of this

blunder, by laying the contradiction at Virgil's door. He, say they, has shewn his heroe with these inconsistent characters: acknowledging and ungrateful, compassionate and hard-hearted; but at the bottom, fickle, and self-interested. For Dido had not only received his weather-beaten troops before she saw him, and given them her protection, but had also offered them an equal share in her dominion.

Vultis et his mecum pariter considerare regnis?

Urbem quam statuo, vestra est.——

This was an obligation never to be forgotten; and the more to be considered, because antecedent to her love. That passion, it is true, produced the usual effects of generosity, gallantry, and care to please; and thither we refer them. But when she had made all these advances, it was still in his power to have refused them: after the intrigue of the cave, call it marriage, or enjoyment only, he was no longer free to take or leave; he had accepted the favour, and was obliged to be constant, if he would be grateful.

My lord, I have set this argument in the best light I can, that the ladies may not think I write booty: and perhaps it may happen to me, as it did to doctor Cudworth, who has raised such strong objections against the being of a God, and providence, that many think he has not answered them. You may please at least to hear the adverse party. Segrais pleads for Virgil, that no less than an absolute command from Jupiter, could excuse this insensibility of the heroe, and this abrupt departure, which looks so like extreme ingratitude. But at the same time, he does wisely to remember you, that Virgil had made piety the first character of Æneas: and this being allowed, as I am afraid it must, he was obliged, antecedent to

all other considerations, to search an asylum for his gods in Italy. For those very gods, I say, who had promised to his race the universal empire. Could a pious man dispense with the commands of Jupiter, to satisfy his passion; or take it in the strongest sense, to comply with the obligations of his gratitude? Religion, it is true, must have moral honesty for its ground-work, or we shall be apt to suspect its truth; but an immediate revelation dispenses with all duties of morality. All casuists agree, that theft is a breach of the moral law: yet if I might presume to mingle things sacred with prophane, the Israelites only spoiled the Egyptians, not robbed them; because the property was transferred, by a revelation, to their law-giver. I confess Dido was a very infidel in this point; for she would not believe, as Virgil makes her say, that ever Jupiter would send Mercury on such an immoral errand. But this needs no answer, at least no more than Virgil gives it:

Fata obstant, placidasque viri Deus obstruit aures.

This notwithstanding, as Segrais confesses, he might have shewn a little more sensibility when he left her; for that had been according to his character.

But let Virgil answer for himself. He still loved her, and struggled with his inclinations, to obey the gods:

— *Curam sub corde premebat,*

Multa gemens, magnoque animum labefactus amore.

Upon the whole matter, and humanly speaking, I doubt there was a fault somewhere; and Jupiter is better able to bear the blame, than either Virgil or Æneas. The poet it seems had found it out, and therefore brings the deserting hero and the forsaken

lady, to meet together in the lower regions; where he excuses himself when it is too late, and accordingly she will take no satisfaction, nor so much as hear him. Now Segrain is forced to abandon his defence, and excuses his author, by saying that the *Æneis* is an imperfect work, and that death prevented the divine poet from reviewing it; and for that reason he had condemned it to the fire: though at the same time, his two translators must acknowledge, that the sixth book is the most correct of the whole *Æneis*. O, how convenient is a machine sometimes in a heroic poem! This of Mercury is plainly one, and Virgil was constrained to use it here, or the honesty of his hero would be ill-defended. And the fair sex however, if they had the deserver in their power, would certainly have shewn him no more mercy, than the Bacchanals did Orpheus. For if too much constancy may be a fault sometimes, then want of constancy, and ingratitude after the last favour, is a crime that never will be forgiven. But of machines, more in their proper place; where I shall shew, with how much judgment they have been used by Virgil: And in the mean time, pass to another article of his defence, on the present subject; where, if I cannot clear the hero, I hope at least to bring off the poet; for here I must divide their causes. Let *Æneas* trust to his machine, which will only help to break his fall, but the address is incomparable. Plato, who borrowed so much from Homer, and yet concluded for the banishment of all poets, would at least have rewarded Virgil, before he sent him into exile. But I go farther, and say, that he ought to be acquitted; and deserved beside the bounty of Augustus, and the gratitude of the Roman people. If after this, the ladies will stand out, let them remember, that the jury is not all agreed; for Octavia

was of his party; and was of the first quality in Rome; she was also present at the reading of the sixth *Aeneid*, and we know not that she condemned *Aeneas*; but we are sure she presented the poet, for his admirable elegy on her son *Marcellus*.

But let us consider the secret reasons which *Virgil* had, for thus framing this noble episode, wherein the whole passion of love is more exactly described, than in any other poet: love was the theme of his fourth book; and though it is the shortest of the whole *Aeneis*, yet there he has given its beginning, its progress, its traverses, and its conclusion; and had exhausted so entirely this subject, that he could resume it but very slightly in the eight ensuing books.

She was warmed with the graceful appearance of the hero, she smothered those sparkles out of decency, but conversation blew them up into a flame. Then she was forced to make a confidant of her, whom she best might trust, her own sister, who approves the passion, and thereby augments it; then succeeds her public owning it; and after that, the consummation. Of *Venus* and *Juno*, *Jupiter* and *Mercury*, I say nothing, for they were all machinating work: but possession having cooled his love, as it increased hers, she soon perceived the change, or at least grew suspicious of a change; this suspicion soon turned to jealousy, and jealousy to rage; then she disdains and threatens, and again is humble, and intreats: and nothing availing, despairs, curses, and at last becomes her own executioner. See here the whole process of that passion, to which nothing can be added. I dare go no farther, lest I should lose the connection of my discourse.

To love our native country, and to study its benefit and its glory, to be interested in its concerns, is natural to all men, and is indeed our common du-

ty. A poet makes a farther step; for endeavouring to do honour to it, it is allowable in him even to be partial in its cause; for he is not tied to truth, or fettered by the laws of history. Homer and Tasso are justly praised, for chusing their heroes out of Greece and Italy; Virgil indeed made his a Trojan, but it was to derive the Romans and his own Augustus from him; but all the three poets are manifestly partial to their heroes, in favour of their country: for Dares Phrygius reports of Hector, that he was slain cowardly; Æneas, according to the best account, slew not Mezentius, but was slain by him; and the chronicles of Italy tell us little of that Rinaldo d'Este, who conquers Jerusalem in Tasso. He might be a champion of the church; but we know not that he was so much as present at the siege. To apply this to Virgil, he thought himself engaged in honour to espouse the cause and quarrel of his country against Carthage. He knew he could not please the Romans better, or oblige them more to patronize his poem, than by disgracing the foundress of that city. He shews her ungrateful to the memory of her first husband, doting on a stranger; enjoyed, and afterwards forsaken by him. This was the original, says he, of the immortal hatred betwixt the two rival nations. It is true, he colours the falsehood of Æneas by an express command from Jupiter, to forsake the queen, who had obliged him: but he knew the Romans were to be his readers, and them he bribed, perhaps at the expence of his hero's honesty, but he gained his cause however; as pleading before corrupt judges. They were content to see their founder false to love, for still he had the advantage of the amour: it was their enemy whom he forsook, and she might have forsaken him, if he had not got the start of her: she had already forgotten

her vows to her Sichæus; and *varium et mutabile semper femina*, is the sharpest satire in the fewest words that ever was made on womankind; for both the adjectives are neuter, and *animal* must be understood to make them grammar. Virgil does well to put those words into the mouth of Mercury: *If a god had not spoken them, neither durst he have written them, nor I translated them*. Yet the deity was forced to come twice on the same errand: and the second time, as much a hero as Æneas was, he frightened him. It seems he feared not Jupiter so much as Dido. For your lordship may observe, that as much intent as he was upon his voyage, yet he still delayed it, till the messenger was obliged to tell him plainly, that if he weighed not anchor in the night, the queen would be with him in the morning. *Naturaque ferens quid femina possit*; she was injured, she was revengeful, she was powerful. The poet had likewise before hinted, that the people were naturally perfidious: for he gives their character in the queen, and makes a proverb of *Punica fides*; many ages before it was invented.

Thus I hope, my lord, that I have made good my promise, and justified the poet, whatever becomes of the false knight. And sure a poet is as much privileged to lye, as an ambassador, for the honour and interest of his country; at least as Sir Henry Wotton has defined.

This naturally leads me to the defence of the famous anachronism, in making Æneas and Dido contemporaries. For it is certain, that the hero lived almost two hundred years before the building of Carthage. One, who imitates Bocaline, says that Virgil was accused before Apollo for this error. The god soon found that he was not able to defend his favourite by reason, for the case was clear: he there-

fore gave this middle sentence; That any thing might be allowed to his son Virgil, on the account of his other merits; That being a monarch he had a dispensing power, and pardoned him. But that this special act of grace might never be drawn into example, or pleaded by his puny successors, in justification of their ignorance; he decreed for the future, No poet should presume to make a lady die for love two hundred years before her birth. To moralize this story, Virgil is the Apollo, who has this dispensing power. His great judgment made the laws of poetry, but he never made himself a slave to them: chronology at best is but a cobweb-law, and he broke through it with his weight. They, who will imitate him wisely, must chuse, as he did, an obscure and a remote æra, where they may invent at pleasure, and not be easily contradicted. Neither he, nor the Romans, had ever read the Bible, by which only his false computation of times can be made out against him. This Segrais says in his defence, and proves it from his learned friend Bochartus, whose letter on this subject, he has printed at the end of the fourth Æneid, to which I refer your lordship and the reader. Yet the credit of Virgil was so great, that he made this fable of his own invention pass for an authentic history, or at least as credible as any thing in Homer. Ovid takes it up after him, even in the same age, and makes an ancient heroine of Virgil's new-created Dido; dictates a letter for her just before her death, to the ingrateful fugitive; and very unluckily for himself, is for measuring a sword with a man so much superior in force to him on the same subject. I think I may be judge of this, because I have translated both. The famous author of the Art of Love has nothing of his own, he borrows all from a greater master in his own profession; and, which

is worse, improves nothing which he finds. Nature fails him, and being forced to his old shift, he has recourse to witticism. This passes indeed with his soft admirers, and gives him the preference to Virgil, in their esteem. But let them like for themselves, and not prescribe to others; for our author needs not their admiration.

The motives that induced Virgil to coin this fable, I have shewed already; and have also begun to shew that he might make this anachronism, by superseding the mechanic rules of poetry, for the same reason, that a monarch may dispense with, or suspend his own laws, when he finds it necessary so to do; especially if those laws are not altogether fundamental. Nothing is to be called a fault in poetry, says Aristotle, but what is against the art; therefore, a man may be an admirable poet, without being an exact chronologer. Shall we dare, continues Segrais, to condemn Virgil, for having made a fiction against the order of time, when we commend Ovid and other poets who have made many of their fictions against the order of nature? For what are the splendid miracles of the Metamorphoses? Yet these are beautiful as they are related; and have also deep learning and instructive mythologies couched under them: But to give, as Virgil does in this episode, the original cause of the long wars betwixt Rome and Carthage, to draw truth out of fiction, after so probable a manner, with so much beauty, and so much for the honour of his country, was proper only to the divine wit of Maro; and Tasso, in one of his discourses, admires him for this particularly. It is not lawful indeed, to contradict a point of history, which is known to all the world, as for example, to make Hannibal and Scipio contemporaries with Alexander; but in the dark recesses of antiquity, a great

poet may and ought to feign such things as he finds not there, if they can be brought to embellish that subject which he treats. On the other side, the pains and diligence of ill poets is but thrown away, when they want the genius to invent and feign agreeably. But if the fictions be delightful, (which they always are, if they be natural,) if they be of a piece; if the beginning, the middle, and the end, be in their due places, and artfully united to each other, such works can never fail of their deserved success. And such is Virgil's episode of Dido and Æneas; where the fourest critic must acknowledge, That if he had deprived his Æneis of so great an ornament, because he found no traces of it in antiquity, he had avoided their unjust censure, but had wanted one of the greatest beauties of his poem. I shall say more of this in the next article of their charge against him; which is, want of invention. In the mean time, I may affirm in honour of this episode, that it is not only now esteemed the most pleasing entertainment of the Æneis, but was so accounted in his own age; and before it was mellowed into that reputation, which time has given it; for which I need produce no other testimony, than that of Ovid, his contemporary.

*Nec pars ulla magis legitur de corpore toto,
Quam non legitimo foedere junctus amor.*

Where by the way, you may observe, my lord, that Ovid in those words,

non legitimo foedere junctus amor,

will by no means allow it to be a lawful marriage betwixt Dido and Æneas. He was in banishment when he wrote those verses, which I cite from his letter to Augustus: You, Sir, saith he, have sent me into

exile for writing my Art of Love, and my wanton epi-
 logies; yet your own poet was happy in your good
 graces, though he brought Dido and Aeneas into a
 cave, and left them there not over-honestly together;
 May I be so bold to ask your majesty, is it a greater
 fault to teach the art of unlawful love, than to shew
 it in the action? But was Ovid the court-poet so bad
 a courtier, as to find no other plea to excuse him-
 self, than by a plain accusation of his master? Vir-
 gil confessed it was a lawful marriage betwixt the
 lovers, that Juno the goddess of matrimony had ra-
 tified it by her presence; for it was her business to
 bring matters to that issue; that the ceremonies were
 short we may believe, for Dido was not only amo-
 rous, but a widow. Mercury himself, though em-
 ployed on a quite contrary errand, yet owns it a mar-
 riage by an *innuendo*. — *Pulchraeque moriens urbem*
Extruit. — He calls Aeneas not only a husband, but
 upbraids him for being a fond husband, as the word
Unoris implies. Now mark a little, if your lordship
 pleases, why Virgil is so much concerned to make
 this marriage, (for he seems to be the father of the
 bride himself, and to give her to the bridegroom) it
 was to make way for the divorce which he intended
 afterwards; for he was a finer flatterer than Ovid;
 and I more than conjecture, that he had in his eye
 the divorce, which not long before had passed be-
 twixt the emperor and Scribonia. He drew this
 simile in the cheek of Aeneas, to prove Augustus of
 the same family, by so remarkable a feature in the
 same place. Thus, as we say in our homespun En-
 glish proverb, *He killed two birds with one stone*;
 pleased the emperor, by giving him the resemblance
 of his ancestor, and gave him such a resemblance as
 was not scandalous in marriage. For to leave one wife

augustus

and take another, was but a matter of gallantry at that time of day among the Romans.

Neque hæc in foedera dem.
is the very excuse which Æneas makes, when he leaves his lady. I made no such bargain with you at our marriage, to live always drudging on at Carthage; my business was Italy, and I never made a secret of it. If I took my pleasure, had not you your share of it? I leave you free at my departure, to comfort yourself with the next stranger who happens to be shipwrecked on your coast; be as kind an hostess as you have been to me, and you can never fail of another husband. In the mean time, I call the gods to witness, that I leave your shore unwillingly, for though Juno made the marriage, yet Jupiter commands me to forsake you. || This is the effect of what he saith, when it is dishonoured out of Latin verse, into English prose. If the poet argued not aright, we must pardon him for a poor blind heathen, who knew no better morals.

I have detained your lordship longer than I intended on this objection; which would indeed weigh something in a spiritual court; but I am not to defend our poet there. The next I think is but a cavil, though the cry is great against him; and hath continued from the time of Macrobius to this present age. I hinted it before. They lay no less than want of invention to his charge: a capital crime, I must acknowledge: for a poet is a maker, as the word signifies; and he who cannot make, that is, invent, hath his name for nothing. That which makes this accusation look so strange at the first sight, is, that he has borrowed so many things from Homer, Apollonius Rhodius, and others who preceded him.

But in the first place, if invention is to be taken in so strict a sense, that the matter of a poem must be wholly new, and that in all its parts; then Scaliger hath made out, saith Segrais, that the history of Troy was no more the invention of Homer, than of Virgil. There was not an old woman, or almost a child, but had it in their mouths, before the Greek poet or his friends digested it into this admirable order in which we read it. At this rate, as Solomon hath told us, there is nothing new beneath the Sun. Who then can pass for an inventor, if Homer, as well as Virgil, must be deprived of that glory? Is Versailles the less a new building, because the architect of that palace hath imitated others which were built before it? Walls, doors and windows, apartments, offices, rooms of convenience and magnificence, are in all great houses. So descriptions, figures, fables, and the rest, must be in all heroic poems: they are the common materials of poetry, furnished from the magazin of nature; every poet hath as much right to them, as every man hath to air or water.

Quid prohibetis aquas? usus communis quantum est.

But the argument of the work, that is to say, its principal action, the oeconomy and disposition of it; these are the things which distinguish copies from originals. The poet, who borrows nothing from others, is yet to be born; he and the Jews-Messiah will come together. There are parts of the *Aeneis*, which resemble some parts both of the *Ilias* and of the *Odyssey*: as for example, *Aeneas* descended into hell, and *Ulysses* had been there before him: *Aeneas* loved *Dido*, and *Ulysses* loved *Calypso*: In few words, Virgil hath imitated Homer's *Odyssey* in his first six books, and in his six last the *Ilias*. But from hence can we infer, that the two poets write the same

history? Is there no invention in some other parts of Virgil's *Æneis*? The disposition of so many various matters, is not that his own? From what book of Homer had Virgil his episode of Nisus and Euryalus, of Mezentius and Lausus? From whence did he borrow his design of bringing *Æneas* into Italy? of establishing the Roman empire on the foundations of a Trojan colony: to say nothing of the honour he did his patron, not only in his descent from Venus, but in making him so like her in his best features, that the goddess might have mistaken Augustus for her son. He had indeed the story from common fame, as Homer had his from the Egyptian priests. *Æneadum Genetrix* was no more unknown to Lucretius, than to him. But Lucretius taught him not to form his heroe; to give him piety or valour for his manners: and both in so eminent a degree, that having done what was possible for man, to save his king and country, his mother was forced to appear to him and restrain his fury, which hurried him to death in their revenge. But the poet made his piety more successful; he brought off his father and his son; and his gods witnessed to his devotion, by putting themselves under his protection, to be re-placed by him, in their promised Italy. Neither the invention, nor the conduct, of this great action, were owing to Homer, or any other poet. It is one thing to copy, and another thing to imitate from nature. The copier is that servile imitator, to whom Horace gives no better a name, than that of animal; he will not so much as allow him to be a man. Raphael imitated nature; they who copy one of Raphael's pieces, imitate but him, for his work is their original. They translate him, as I do Virgil; and fall as short of him, as I of Virgil. There is a kind of in-

vention in the imitation of Raphael; for though the thing was in nature, yet the idea of it was his own. Ulysses travelled, so did Æneas; but neither of them were the first travellers: for Cain went into the land of Nod, before they were born: and neither of the poets ever heard of such a man. If Ulysses had been killed at Troy, yet Æneas must have gone to sea, or he could never have arrived in Italy. But the designs of the two poets, were as different as the courses of their heroes; one went home, and the other sought a home. To return to my first similitude. Suppose Apelles and Raphael had each of them painted a burning Troy; might not the modern painter have succeeded as well as the ancient, though neither of them had seen the town on fire? For the draughts of both were taken from the ideas which they had of nature. Cities have been burnt, before either of them were in being. But to close the simile as I began it; they would not have designed it after the same manner: Apelles would have distinguished Pyrrhus from the rest of all the Grecians, and shewed him, forcing his entrance into Priam's palace; there he had set him in the fairest light, and given him the chief place of all his figures; because he was a Grecian, and he would do honour to his country. Raphael, who was an Italian, and descended from the Trojans, would have made Æneas the hero of his piece; and perhaps not with his father on his back; his son in one hand, his bundle of gods in the other; and his wife following; (for an act of piety is not half so graceful in a picture, as an act of courage;) he would have rather drawn him killing Androgeus, or some other, hand to hand; and the blaze of the fires should have darted full upon his face, to make him conspicuous amongst his Trojans. This I think is a just comparison betwixt the two poets, in

the conduct of their several designs. Virgil cannot be said to copy Homer; the Grecian had only the advantage of writing first. If it be urged, that I have granted a resemblance in some parts; yet therein Virgil has excelled him. For what are the tears of Calypso for being left, to the fury and death of Dido? Where is there the whole process of her passion, and all its violent effects to be found, in the languishing episode of the *Odyssey*? If this be a copy, let the critics shew us the same disposition, features, or colouring in their original. The like may be said of the descent to hell; which was not of Homer's invention neither; he had it from the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. But to what end did Ulysses make that journey? Æneas undertook it by the express commandment of his father's ghost: there he was to shew him all the succeeding heroes of his race: and next to Romulus, (mark, if you please, the address of Virgil) his own patron Augustus Cæsar. Anchises was likewise to instruct him, how to manage the Italian war, and how to conclude it with his honour. That is, in other words, to lay the foundations of that empire which Augustus was to govern. This is the noble invention of our author; but it hath been copied by so many sign-post dawblers, that now it is grown fustian; rather by their want of skill, than by the commonness.

In the last place, I may safely grant, that by reading Homer, Virgil was taught to imitate his invention; that is, to imitate like him: which is no more, than if a painter studied Raphael, that he might learn to design after his manner. And thus I might imitate Virgil, if I were capable of writing an heroic poem, and yet the invention be my own: but I should endeavour to avoid a servile copying. I would

not give the same story under other names, with the same characters, in the same order, and with the same sequel; for every common reader to find me out at the first sight for a plagiarist, and cry, This I read before in Virgil, in a better language, and in better verse. This is like Merry-Andrew on the low rope, copying lubberly the same tricks, which his master is so dextrously performing on the high.

I will trouble your lordship but with one objection more; which I know not whether I found in le Fevre, or Valois; but I am sure I have read it in another French critic, whom I will not name, because I think it is not much for his reputation. Virgil, in the heat of action, suppose for example, in describing the fury of his heroes in a battle, when he is endeavouring to raise our concernments to the highest pitch, turns short on the sudden into some similitude, which diverts, say they, your attention from the main subject, and mispende it on some trivial image. He pours cold water into the caldron, when his business is to make it boil.

This accusation is general against all who would be thought heroic poets; but I think it touches Virgil less than any. He is too great a master of this art, to make a blot which may so easily be hit. Similitudes, as I have said, are not for tragedy, which is all violent, and where the passions are in a perpetual ferment; for there they deaden where they should animate; they are not of the nature of dialogue, unless in comedy: A metaphor is almost all the stage can suffer, which is a kind of similitude comprehended in a word. But this figure has a contrary effect in heroic poetry; there it is employed to raise the admiration, which is its proper business. And admiration is not of so violent a nature as fear or hope, compassion or horror, or any concernment we can

have for such or such a person on the stage. Not but I confess, that similitudes and descriptions, when drawn into an unreasonablen length, must needs nauseate the reader. Once I remember, and but once, Virgil makes a similitude of fourteen lines; and his description of Fame is about the same number. He is blamed for both; and I doubt not but he would have contracted them, had he lived to have reviewed his work: but faults are no precedents. This I have observed of his similitudes in general, that they are not placed, as our unobserving critics tell us, in the heat of any action; but commonly in its declining, when he has warmed us in his description, as much as possibly he can; then, lest that warmth should languish, he renews it by some apt similitude, which illustrates his subject, and yet palls not his audience. I need give your lordship but one example of this kind, and leave the rest to your observation, when next you review the whole Æneis in the original, unblemished by my rude translation. It is in the first book, where the poet describes Neptune composing the ocean, on which Æolus had raised a tempest, without his permission. He had already chidden the rebellious winds for obeying the commands of their usurping master: he had warned them from the seas: he had beaten down the billows with his mace; dispelled the clouds, restored the sun-shine, while Triton and Cymothoe were heaving the ships from off the quick-sands; before the poet would offer us a similitude for illustration.

Ac, veluti magno in populo cum saepe coacta est

Seditio, sacraeque animis ignobile vulgus

Tanqua faceti et saxa volant, furor armis ministrat

Tum pietate gravem, ac meritis si forte, puerum quem

—

Conspexeris, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant:
Ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet:
Sic cunctus pelagi cecidit fragor, æquora postquam
Prospiciens gentem, edocloque inuictus aperto
Fluitat æquor, utraque volans dat lora secundo.

This is the first similitude which Virgil makes in this poem, and one of the longest in the whole; for which reason I the rather cite it. While the storm was in its fury, any allusion had been improper; for the poet could have compared it to nothing more impetuous than itself; consequently he could have made no illustration. If he could have illustrated, it had been an ambitious ornament out of season, and would have diverted our concernment:

Nunc, non erat his locus; _____
 and therefore, he deferred it to its proper place.

These are the criticisms of most moment which have been made against the *Æneis*, by the ancients or moderns. As for the particular exceptions against this or that passage, Macrobius and Pontanus have answered them already. If I desired to appear more learned than I am, it had been as easy for me to have taken their objections and solutions, as it is for a country parson to take the expositions of the fathers out of Junius and Tremellius. Or not to have named the authors from whence I had them: for so Ruæus, otherwise a most judicious commentator on Virgil's works, has used Pontanus, his greatest benefactor; of whom he is very silent, and I do not remember that he once cites him.

What follows next, is no objection; for that implies a fault: and it had been none in Virgil, if he had extended the time of his action beyond a year. At least Aristotle has set no precise limits to it. Ho-

mer's, we know, was within two months; Tasso, I am sure, exceeds not a summer: and if I examined him, perhaps he might be reduced into a much less compass. Bossu leaves it doubtful whether Virgil's actions were within the year, or took up some months beyond it. Indeed the whole dispute is of no more concernment to the common reader, than it is to a plough-man, whether February this year had 28 or 29 days in it. But for the satisfaction of the more curious, of which number, I am sure your lordship is one; I will translate what I think convenient out of Segrais, whom perhaps you have not read: for he has made it highly probable, that the action of the *Æneis* began in the spring, and was not extended beyond the autumn. And we have known campaigns that have begun sooner, and have ended latter.

Ronsard and the rest whom Segrais names, who are of opinion that the action of this poem takes up almost a year and a half, ground their calculation thus. Anchises died in Sicily at the end of winter, or beginning of the spring. *Æneas*, immediately after the interment of his father, puts to sea for Italy. He is surprized by the tempest described in the beginning of the first book; and there it is that the scene of the poem opens; and where the action must commence. He is driven by this storm on the coasts of *Afric*: he stays at *Carthage* all that summer, and almost all the winter following: sets sail again for Italy just before the beginning of the spring; meets with contrary winds, and makes *Sicily* the second time: this part of the action completes the year. Then he celebrates the anniversary of his father's funeral, and shortly after arrives at *Cumæ*, and from thence his time is taken up in his first treaty with *Latinus*; the overture

of the war; the siege of his camp by Turnus; his going for succours to relieve it; his return; the raising of the siege by the first battle; the twelve days truce; the second battle; the assault of Laurentum, and the single fight with Turnus; all which, they say, cannot take up less than four or five months more; by which account we cannot suppose the entire action to be contained in a much less compass than a year and a half.

Segrais reckons another way; and his computation is not condemned by the learned Ruæus, who compiled and published the commentaries on our poet, which we call the Dauphin's Virgil.

He allows the time of the year when Anchises died, to be in the latter end of winter, or the beginning of the spring; he acknowledges, that when Æneas is first seen at sea afterwards, and is driven by the tempest on the coast of Afric, is the time when the action is naturally to begin: he confesses farther, that Æneas left Carthage in the latter end of winter; for Dido tells him in express terms, as an argument, for his longer stay,

Quinetiam Hyberno moliris sydere classem.

But whereas Ronsard's followers suppose that when Æneas had buried his father, he set sail immediately for Italy, (though the tempest drove him on the coast of Carthage) Segrais will by no means allow that supposition; but thinks it much more probable that he remained in Sicily till the midst of July, or the beginning of August; at which time he places the first appearance of his hero on the sea, and there opens the action of the poem. From which beginning, to the death of Turnus, which concludes the action, there need not be supposed above ten months of intermediate time: for arriving

at Carthage in the latter end of summer; staying there the winter following; departing thence in the very beginning of the spring; making a short abode in Sicily the second time, landing in Italy, and making the war, may be reasonably judged the business but of ten months. To this the Nonfardiana reply, that having been for seven years before in quest of Italy, and having no more to do in Sicily, than to inter his father; after that office was performed, what remained for him, but, without delay, to pursue his first adventure? To which Segræus answers; that the obsequies of his father, according to the rites of the Greeks and Romans, would detain him for many days; that a longer time must be taken up in the refitting of his ships, after so tedious a voyage; and in refreshing his weather-beaten soldiers on a friendly coast. These indeed are but suppositions on both sides; yet those of Segræus seem better grounded. For the feast of Dido, when she entertained Æneas first, has the appearance of a summer's night, which seems already almost ended, when he begins his story: therefore the love was made in autumn; the hunting followed properly, when the heats of that scorching country were declining: the winter was passed in jollity, as the season and their love required; and he left her in the latter end of winter, as is already proved. This opinion is fortified by the arrival of Æneas at the mouth of Tyber; which marks the season of the spring; that season being perfectly described by the singing of the birds, saluting the dawn; and by the beauty of the place: which the poet seems to have painted expressly in the seventh Æneid:

Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis;

Cum venti posuere; variae circumq; supragae

*Assuetæ ripis volucres, et fluminis alveo,
Æthera mulcebant cantu.*

The remainder of the action required but three months more; for when Æneas went for succour to the Tuscans, he found their army in a readiness to march; and wanting only a commander: so that according to this calculation, the Æneis takes not up above a year complete, and may be comprehended in less compass.

This, amongst other circumstances, treated more at large by Segrain, agrees with the rising of Orion, which caused the tempest, described in the beginning of the first book. By some passages in the Pastorals, but more particularly in the Georgics, our poet is found to be an exact astronomer, according to the knowledge of that age. Now, Ilioneus (whom Virgil twice employs in embassies, as the best speaker of the Trojans) attributes that tempest to Orion in his speech to Dido,

Cum subito assurgens fluctu nimbosus Orion.

He must mean either the Heliacal or Achronical rising of that sign. The Heliacal rising of a constellation, is when it comes from under the rays of the sun, and begins to appear before day-light. The Achronical rising, on the contrary, is when it appears at the close of day, and in opposition of the sun's diurnal course.

The Heliacal rising of Orion, is at present computed to be about the sixth of July; and about that time it is, that he either causes, or prefaces tempests on the seas.

Segrain has observed farther, that when Anna counsels Dido to stay Æneas during the winter; she speaks also of Orion,

Dum pelago descevit hyems, et aquosus Orion.

If therefore Ilioneus, according to our supposition, understand the Heliacal rising of Orion: Anna must mean the Achironical, which the different epithets given to that constellation, seem to manifest. Ilioneus calls him *nimbosus*, Anna *aquosus*. He is tempestuous in the summer when he rises Heliacally, and rainy in winter when he rises Achironically. Your lordship will pardon me for the frequent repetition of these cant words; which I could not avoid in this abbreviation of Segrais; who, I think, deserves no little commendation in this new criticism. I have yet a word or two to say of Virgil's machines, from my own observation of them. He has imitated those of Homer, but not copied them. It was established long before this time, in the Roman religion as well as in the Greek, that there were gods; and both nations, for the most part, worshipped the same deities; as did also the Trojans: from whom the Romans, I suppose, would rather be thought to derive the rites of their religion, than from the Grecians; because they thought themselves descended from them. Each of those gods had his proper office, and the chief of them their particular attendants. Thus Jupiter had in propriety Ganymede and Mercury; and Juno had Iris. It was not for Virgil then to create new ministers: he must take what he found in his religion. It cannot therefore be said that he borrowed them from Homer, any more than Apollo, Diana, and the rest, whom he uses as he finds occasion for them, as the Grecian poet did: but he invents the occasions for which he uses them. Venus, after the destruction of Troy, had gained Neptune entirely to her party; therefore, we find him busy in the beginning of the Æneis, to

calm the tempest raised by Æolus, and afterwards conducting the Trojan fleet to Cumæ in safety, with the loss only of their pilot; for whom he bargains. I name those two examples amongst a hundred which I omit; to prove that Virgil, generally speaking, employed his machines in performing those things which might possibly have been done without them. What more frequent than a storm at sea, upon the rising of Orion? What wonder, if amongst so many ships there should one be overset, which was commanded by Orontes; though half the winds had not been there, which Æolus employed? Might not Palinurus, without a miracle, fall asleep, and drop into the sea, having been over-wearied with watching, and secure of a quiet passage, by his observation of the skies? At least Æneas, who knew nothing of the machine of Somnus, takes it plainly in this sense;

*O ultimum Coelo et Pelago confise sereno,
Nudus in ignota Palinure jacebis arena.*

But machines sometimes are specious things to amuse the reader, and give a colour of probability to things otherwise incredible. And besides, it soothed the vanity of the Romans, to find the gods so visibly concerned in all the actions of their predecessors. We who are better taught by our religion, yet own every wonderful accident which befalls us for the best, to be brought to pass by some special providence of Almighty God; and by the care of guardian angels; and from hence I might infer, that no heroic poem can be writ on the Epicurean principles. Which I could easily demonstrate, if there were need to prove it, or I had leisure.

When Venus opens the eyes of her son Æneas, to behold the gods who combated against Troy, in that

fatal night when it was surprized; we share the pleasure of that glorious vision, (which Tasso has not ill copied in the sacking of Jerusalem.) But the Greeks had done their business; though neither Neptune, Juno, or Pallas, had given them their divine assistance. The most crude machine which Virgil uses, is in the episode of Camilla, where Opis, by the command of her mistress, kills Aruna. The next is in the twelfth Æneid, where Venus cures her son Æneas. But in the last of these, the poet was driven to a necessity; for Turnus was to be slain that very day; and Æneas, wounded as he was, could not have engaged him in single combat, unless his hurt had been miraculously healed. And the poet had considered, that the Dittany which she brought from Crete, could not have wrought so speedy an effect, without the juice of ambrosia, which she mingled with it. After all, that his machine might not seem too violent, we see the hero limping after Turnus. The wound was skinned; but the strength of his thigh was not restored. But what reason had our author to wound Æneas at so critical a time? And how came the cuisses to be worse tempered than the rest of his armour, which was all wrought by Vulcan and his journeymen? These difficulties are not easily to be solved, without confessing that Virgil had not life enough to correct his work; though he had reviewed it, and found those errors which he resolved to mend: but being prevented by death, and not willing to leave an imperfect work behind him, he ordained, by his last testament, that his Æneis should be burned. As for the death of Aruns, who was shot by a goddess, the machine was not altogether so outrageous, as the wounding Mars and Venus by the sword of Diomedes. Two divinities, one would have thought, might have pleaded their pre-

rogative of impassibility, or at least not have been wounded by any mortal hand. Beside that the *ixor* which they shed, was so very like our common blood, that it was not to be distinguished from it, but only by the name and colour. As for what Horace says in his Art of Poetry; that no machines are to be used, unless on some extraordinary occasion,

Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus;

That rule is to be applied to the theatre, of which he is then speaking; and means no more than this, that when the knot of the play is to be untied, and no other way is left, for making the discovery; then and not otherwise, let a god descend upon a rope, and clear the business to the audience: but this has no relation to the machines which are used in an epic poem.

In the last place, for the Dira, or flying pest, which flapping on the shield of Turnus, and fluttering about his head, disheartened him in the duel, and prefaged to him his approaching death, I might have placed it more properly amongst the objections. For the critics, who lay want of courage to the charge of Virgil's heroic, quote this passage as a main proof of their assertion. They say our author had not only secured him before the duel, but also in the beginning of it, had given him the advantage in impentrate arms, and in his sword: for that of Turnus was not his own, which was forged by Vulcan for his father; but a weapon which he had snatched in haste, and by mistake, belonging to his charioteer Mevificus. That after all this, Jupiter, who was partial to the Trojan, and distrustful of the event, tho' he had hung the balance, and given it a jog of his hand to weigh down Turnus, thought convenient to give the fates a collateral security, by sending the

the screech-owl to discourage him. For which they quote these words of Virgil.

*Non me tua turbida virtus
Terret, ait; Dii me terrent, et Jupiter hostis.*

In answer to which, I say, that this machine is one of those which the poet uses only for ornament, and not out of necessity. Nothing can be more beautiful, or more poetical than this description of the three Diræ, or the setting of the balance, which our Milton has borrowed from him, but employed to a different end: For first, he makes God Almighty set the scales for St. Gabriel and Satan, when he knew no combat was to follow; then he makes the good angel's scale descend, and the devil's mount; quite contrary to Virgil, if I have translated the three verses according to my author's sense.

*Jupiter ipse duos æquato examine lances
Sustinet: et fata imponit diversa duorum:
Quem damnet labor, et quo vergat pondere lethum.*

For I have taken these words, *Quem damnet labor*, in the sense which Virgil gives them in another place; *Damnabis tu quoque votis*, to signify a prosperous event. Yet I dare not condemn so great a genius as Milton: for I am much mistaken if he alludes not to the text in Daniel, where Belshazzar was put into the balance, and found too light. This is digression, and I return to my subject. I said above, that these two machines of the balance, and the Dira, were only ornamental, and that the success of the duel had been the same without them. For when Æneas and Turnus stood fronting each other before the altar, Turnus looked dejected, and his colour faded in his face, as if he desponded of the victory before the fight; and not

only he, but all his party, when the strength of the two champions was judged by the proportion of their limbs, concluded it was *impar pugna*, and that their chief was over-matched: whereupon Juturna (who was of the same opinion) took this opportunity to break the treaty and renew the war. Juno herself had plainly told the nymph beforehand, that her brother was to fight

Imparibus satis; nec Diis, nec viribus aequis;

So that there was no need of an apparition to fright Turnus, he had the presage within himself of his impending destiny. The Dira only served to confirm him in his first opinion, that it was his destiny to die in the ensuing combat. And in this sense are those words of Virgil to be taken: 1

— *Non me tua turbida virtus*

Terret, ait: Dis me tercentis, et Jupiter hostis.

I doubt not but the adverb (*solum*) is to be understood; it is not your valour only that gives me this concernment; but I find also, by this portent, that Jupiter is my enemy. For Turnus fled before, when his first sword was broken, till his sister supplied him with a better; which indeed he could not use; because Aeneas kept him at a distance with his spear. I wonder Rupeus saw not this, when he charges his author so unjustly, for giving Turnus a second sword to no purpose. How could he sustain a blow, or make a thrust, when he was not suffered to approach? Besides, the chief errand of the Dira, was to warn Juturna from the field, for she could have brought the chariot again, when she saw her brother worsted in the duel; I might farther add, that Aeneas was so eager of the fight, that he left the city, now almost in his possession, to decide his quarrel with Turnus by the

sword: whereas Turnus had manifestly declined the combat, and suffered his sister to convey him as far from the reach of his enemy as she could. I say, not only suffered her, but consented to it; for it is plain, he knew her by these words:

*O soror et dudum agnovi, cum prima per artem
Foedera turbasti, teque hæc in bella dedisti;
Et nunc nequicquam fallis Dea.*——

I have dwelt so long on this subject, that I must contract what I have to say, in reference to my translation; unless I would swell my preface into a volume, and make it formidable to your lordship, when you see so many pages yet behind. And indeed, what I have already written, either in justification or praise of Virgil, is against myself; for presuming to copy, in my coarse English, the thoughts and beautiful expressions of this inimitable poet; who flourished in an age when his language was brought to its last perfection, for which it was particularly owing to him and Horace, I will give your lordship my opinion, that those two friends had consulted each other's judgment, wherein they should endeavour to excel; and they seem to have pitched on propriety of thought, elegance of words, and harmony of numbers. According to this model, Horace writ his odes and epods: for his satires and epistles, being intended wholly for instruction, required another stile:

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri.

And therefore, as he himself professes, are *sermoni propiora*, nearer prose than verse. But Virgil, who never attempted the lyric verse, is every where elegant, sweet and flowing in his hexameters. His words are not only chosen, but the places in which,

he ranks them for the sound; he, who removes them from the station wherein their master set them, spoils the harmony. What he says of the Sibyls prophecies, may be as properly applied to every word of his: they must be read, in order as they lie; the least breath discomposes them, and somewhat of their divinity is lost. I cannot boast that I have been thus exact in my verses, but I have endeavoured to follow the example of my master: and am the first Englishman, perhaps, who made it his design to copy him in his numbers, his choice of words, and his placing them for the sweetness of the sound. On this last consideration, I have shuned the Cæsura as much as possibly I could. For where-ever that is used, it gives a roughness to the verse; of which we can have little need, in a language which is overstocked with consonants. Such is not the Latin, where the vowels and consonants are mixed in proportion to each other: yet Virgil judged the vowels to have somewhat of an over-balance, and therefore, tempers their sweetness with Cæsuras. Such difference there is in tongues, that the same figure which roughens one, gives majesty to another: and that was it which Virgil studied in his verses. Ovid uses it but rarely; and hence it is that his versification cannot so properly be called sweet, as luscious. The Italians are forced upon it, once or twice in every line, because they have a redundancy of vowels in their language. Their metal is so soft, that it will not coin without alloy to harden it. On the other side, for the reason already named, it is all we can do to give sufficient sweetness to our language: we must not only chuse our words for elegance, but for sound. To perform which, a mastery in the language is required: the poet must have a magazin of words, and have the art to manage his few vow-

els to the best advantage, that they may go the farther. He must also know the nature of the vowels, which are more sonorous, and which more soft and sweet; and so dispose them as his present occasions require: all which, and a thousand secrets of versification beside, he may learn from Virgil, if he will take him for his guide. If he be above Virgil, and is resolved to follow his own verve (as the French call it) the proverb will fall heavily upon him; *Who teaches himself, has a fool for his master.*

Virgil employed eleven years upon his *Æneis*, yet he left it, as he thought himself, imperfect. Which when I seriously consider, I wish, that instead of three years which I have spent in the translation of his works, I had four years more allowed me to correct my errors, that I might make my version somewhat more tolerable than it is. For a poet cannot have too great a reverence for his readers, if he expects his labours should survive him. Yet I will neither plead my age nor sickness, in excuse of the faults which I have made: that I wanted time, is all that I have to say. For some of my subscribers grew so clamorous, that I could no longer defer the publication. I hope from the candour of your lordship, and your often experienced goodness to me; that if the faults are not too many, you will make allowances with Horace;

Si plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis

Offendâr maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,

Aut humana parum cavit natura.——

You may please also to observe, that there is not, to the best of my remembrance, one vowel gaping on another for want of a *Caesura*, in this whole poem. But where a vowel ends a word, the next begins either with a consonant, or what is its equiva-

lent; for our *W* and *H* aspirate, and our diphthongs are plainly such: the greatest latitude I take is in the letter *Y*, when it concludes a word, and the first syllable of the next begins with a vowel. Neither need I have called this a latitude, which is only an explanation of this general rule: that no vowel can be cut off before another, when we cannot sink the pronunciation of it; as *He, She, Me, I*, etc. Virgil thinks it sometimes a beauty to imitate the licence of the Greeks, and leave two vowels opening on each other, as in that verse of the third pastoral,

Et succus pecoris, et lac subducitur agnis.

But, *nobis non licet esse tam disertis.* At least, if we study to refine our numbers. I have long had by me the materials of an English Prosodia, containing all the mechanical rules of versification, wherein I have treated with some exactness of the feet, the quantities, and the pauses. The French and Italians know nothing of the two first; at least their best poets have not practised them. As for the pauses, Malherd first brought them into France, within this last century: and we see how they adorn their Alexandrians. But as Virgil propounds a riddle which he leaves unsolved;

*Dic quibus in terris, inscripti nomina regum
Nascentur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto;*

So I will give your lordship another, and leave the exposition of it to your acute judgment. I am sure there are few who make verses, have observed the sweetness of these two lines in Coopers Hill.

*Tho' deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strang without rage, without o'erflowing full.*

And there are yet fewer who can find the reason of

that sweetness. I have given it to some of my friends in conversation, and they have allowed the criticism to be just. But since the evil of false quantities is difficult to be cured in any modern language; since the French and the Italians, as well as we, are yet ignorant what feet are to be used in heroic poetry; since I have not strictly observed those rules myself, which I can teach others; since I pretend to no dictatorship among my fellow-poets; since if I should instruct some of them to make well-running verses, they want genius to give them strength as well as sweetness: and above all, since your lordship has advised me not to publish that little which I know, I look on your counsel as your command, which I shall observe inviolably, till you shall please to revoke it, and leave me at liberty to make my thoughts public. In the mean time, that I may arrogate nothing to myself, I must acknowledge that Virgil in Latin, and Spenser in English, have been my masters. Spenser has also given me the boldness to make use sometimes of his Alexandrian line, which we call, though improperly, the Pindaric; because Mr. Cowley has often employed it in his odes. It adds a certain majesty to the verse, when it is used with judgment, and stops the sense from overflowing into another line. Formerly the French, like us, and the Italians, had but five feet, or ten syllables in their heroic verse: but since Ronsard's time, as I suppose, they found their tongue too weak to support their epic poetry, without the addition of another foot. That indeed, has given it somewhat of the run and measure of a Trimeter; but it runs with more activity than strength: their language is not strung with sinews like our English. It has the nimbleness of a greyhound, but not the bulk and body of a mastiff. Our men and our verses over-bear them by their

weight; and *pondere non numero*, is the British motto. The French have set up purity for the standard of their language; and a masculine vigour is that of ours. Like their tongue is the genius of their poets, light and trifling in comparison of the English; more proper for sonnets, madrigals, and elegies, than heroic poetry. The turn on thoughts and words is their chief talent, but the epic poem is too stately to receive those little ornaments. The painters draw their nymphs in thin and airy habits, but the weight of gold and of embroideries is reserved for queens and goddesses. Virgil is never frequent in those turns, like Ovid, but much more sparing of them in his *Aeneis*, than in his *Pastorals* and *Georgics*:

Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.

That turn is beautiful indeed; but he employs it in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, not in his great poem. I have used that license in his *Aeneis* sometimes: but I own it as my fault. It was given to those who understand no better. It is like Ovid's

Semivirumque bovem, semibovemque virum.

The poet found it before his critics, but it was a darling sin which he would not be persuaded to reform. The want of genius, of which I have accused the French, is laid to their charge by one of their own great authors, though I have forgotten his name, and where I read it. If rewards could make good poets, their great master has not been wanting on his part in his bountiful encouragements; for he is wise enough to imitate Augustus, if he had a Maro. The Triumvir and Prosciber had descended to us in a more hideous form than they now appear, if the emperor had not taken care to make friends of him

and Horace. I confess the banishment of Ovid was a blot in his escutcheon; yet he was only banished, and who knows but his crime was capital, and then his exile was a favour? Ariosto, who, with all his faults, must be acknowledged a great poet, has put these words into the mouth of an evangelist, but whether they will pass for gospel now, I cannot tell.

*Non fu sì santo ni benigno Augusto,
Come la tuba di Virgilio suona;
L'haver havuta in poesia buon gusto,
La proscrittione iniqua gli pardona.*

But heroic poetry is not of the growth of France, as it might be of England, if it were cultivated. Spenser wanted only to have read the rules of Boſſu; for no man was ever born with a greater genius, or had more knowlege to support it. But the performance of the French is not equal to their skill: and hitherto we have wanted skill to perform better. Segrais, whose preface is so wonderfully good, yet is wholly destitute of elevation; though his version is much better than that of the two brothers, or any of the rest who have attempted Virgil. Hannibal Caro is a great name amongst the Italians, yet his translation of the *Æneis* is most scandalously mean, though he has taken the advantage of writing in blank verse, and freed himself from the shackles of modern rhyme: (if it be modern, for Le Clerc has told us lately, and I believe has made it out, that David's Psalms were written in as errant rhyme as they are translated.) Now if a muse cannot run when she is unfettered, it is a sign she has but little speed. I will not make a digression here, though I am strangely tempted to it; but will only say, that he who can write well in rhyme, may write better in blank verse. Rhyme is certainly a constraint even

to the best poets, and those who make it with most ease; though perhaps I have as little reason to complain of that hardship as any man, excepting Quarrels, and Withers. What it adds to sweetness, it takes away from sense; and he who loses the least by it, may be called a gainer: it often makes us swerve from an author's meaning. As if a mark be set up for an archer at a great distance, let him aim as exactly as he can, the least wind will take his arrow, and divert it from the white. I return to our Italian translator of the *Æneis*: He is a foot-poet, he lags by the side of Virgil at the best, but never mounts behind him. Doctor Morelli, who is no mean critic in our poetry, and therefore may be presumed to be a better in his own language, has confirmed me in this opinion by his judgment, and thinks withal, that he has often mistaken his master's sense. I would say so, if I durst, but am afraid I have committed the same fault more often, and more grossly: for I have forsaken Ruæus, (whom generally I follow) in many places, and made expositions of my own in some, quite contrary to him. Of which I will give but two examples, because they are so near each other, in the tenth *Æneid*.

—*Sorti Pater æquus utrique.*

Pallas says it to Turnus, just before they fight. Ruæus thinks that the word Pater is to be referred to Evander the father of Pallas. But how could he imagine that it was the same thing to Evander, if his son were slain, or if he overcame? The poet certainly intended Jupiter the common father of mankind; who, as Pallas hoped, would stand an impartial spectator of the combat, and not be more favourable to Turnus, than to him. The second is not long after it, and both before the duel is begun.

They are the words of Jupiter, who comforts Hercules for the death of Pallas, which was immediately to ensue, and which Hercules could not hinder; (though the young hero had addressed his prayers to him for his assistance;) because the gods cannot controul destiny. — The verse follows:

Sic ait; atque oculos Rotulorum rejicit arvis.

Which the same Ruæus thus construes: Jupiter, after he had said this, immediately turns his eyes to the Rutulian fields, and beholds the duel. I have given this place another exposition, that he turned his eyes from the field of combat, that he might not behold a sight so unpleasing to him. The word *rejicit* I know will admit of both senses; but Jupiter having confessed that he could not alter fate, and being grieved he could not, in consideration of Hercules, it seems to me that he should avert his eyes, rather than take pleasure in the spectacle. But of this I am not so confident as the other, though I think I have followed Virgil's sense.

What I have said, though it has the face of arrogance, yet is intended for the honour of my country; and therefore, I will boldly own, that this English translation has more of Virgil's spirit in it, than either the French, or the Italian. Some of our countrymen have translated episodes, and other parts of Virgil, with great success. As particularly your lordship, whose version of Orpheus and Eurydice is eminently good. Amongst the dead authors, the Silenus of my lord Roscommon cannot be too much commended. I say nothing of Sir John Denham, Mr. Waller, and Mr. Cowley; it is the utmost of my ambition to be thought their equal, or not to be much inferior to them, and some others of the living. But

it is one thing to take pains on a fragment, and translate it perfectly; and another thing to have the weight of a whole author on my shoulders. They who believe the burden light, let them attempt the fourth, sixth, or eighth Pastoral; the first or fourth Georgic; and amongst the *Æneids*, the fourth, the fifth, the seventh, the ninth, the tenth, the eleventh, or the twelfth; for in these I think I have succeeded best.

Long before I undertook this work, I was no stranger to the original. I had also studied Virgil's design, his disposition of it, his manners, his judicious management of the figures, the sober retrenchments of his sense, which always leaves somewhat to gratify our imagination, on which it may enlarge at pleasure; but, above all, the elegance of his expression, and the harmony of his numbers. For, as I have said in a former dissertation, the words are in poetry, what the colours are in painting. If the design be good, and the draught be true, the colouring is the first beauty that strikes the eye. Spenser and Milton are the nearest, in English, to Virgil and Horace in the Latin; and I have endeavoured to form my stile in imitating their masters. I will further own to you, my lord, that my chief ambition is to please those readers who have discernment enough to prefer Virgil before any other poet in the Latin tongue. Such spirits as he desired to please, such would I chuse for my judges, and would stand or fall by them alone. Segrain has distinguished the readers of poetry, according to their capacity of judging, into three classes: (he might have said the same of writers too, if he had pleased.) In the lowest form he places those whom he calls *Les Petits Esprits*: such things as are our upper-gallery audience in a play-house: who like nothing but the husk and rind of wit; prefer a quibble, a conceit, an epigram, be-

fore solid sense, and elegant expression: these are mobb-readers: if Virgil and Martial stood for parliament-men, we know already who would carry it. But though they make the greatest appearance in the field, and cry the loudest, the best of it is, they are but a sort of French-Hugonots, or Dutch-Boors, brought over in herds, but not naturalized: who have not land of two pounds *per annum* in Parnassus, and therefore are not privileged to poll. Their authors are of the same level; fit to represent them on a mountebank's-stage, or to be masters of the ceremonies in a bear-garden. Yet these are they who have the most admirers. But it often happens, to their mortification, that as their readers improve their stock of sense, (as they may by reading better books, and by conversation with men of judgment) they soon forsake them: and when the torrent from the mountains falls no more, the swelling writer is reduced into his shallow bed, like the Mançanares at Madrid, with scarce water to moisten his own pebbles. There are a middle sort of readers, (as we hold there is a middle state of souls) such as have a farther insight than the former; yet have not the capacity of judging right; (for I speak not of those who are bribed by a party, and know better if they were not corrupted;) but I mean a company of warm young men, who are not yet arrived so far as to discern the difference betwixt fullian, or ostentatious sentences, and the true sublime. These are above liking Martial or Owen's epigrams, but they would certainly set Virgil below Statius, or Lucan. I need not say their poets are of the same taste with their admirers. They affect greatness in all they write, but it is a bladdered greatness, like that of the vain man whom Seneca describes: an ill habit of body,

full of humours, and swelled with dropſy. Even theſe too deſert their authors, as their judgment ripens. The young gentlemen themſelves are commonly miſled by their Paedagogue at ſchool, their tutor at the univerſity, or their governor in their travels. And many of thoſe three ſorts are the moſt poſitive block-heads in the world. How many of thoſe flatulent writers have I known, who have ſunk in their reputation, after ſeven or eight editions of their works? for indeed they are poets only for young men. They had great ſucceſs at their firſt appearance; but not being of God, as a wit ſaid formerly, they could not ſtand.

I have already named two ſorts of judges, but Virgil wrote for neither of them; and, by his example, I am not ambitious of pleaſing the loweſt, or the middle form of readers.

He choſe to pleaſe the moſt judicious: ſouls of the higheſt rank, and trueſt underſtanding. There are few in number; but whoever is ſo happy as to gain their approbation, can never loſe it, becauſe they never give it blindly. Then they have a certain magnetiſm in their judgment, which attracts others to their ſenſe. Every day they gain ſome new proſelyte, and in time become the church. For this reaſon, a well-weighed judicious poem, which at its firſt appearance gains no more upon the world than to be juſt received, and rather not blamed, than much applauded, inſinuates itſelf by inſenſible degrees into the liking of the reader: the more he ſtudies it, the more it grows upon him; every time he takes it up, he diſcovers ſome new graces in it. And whereas poems, which are produced by the vigour of imagination only, have a gloſs upon them at the firſt, which time wears off; the works of judgment, are like the diamond, the more they are poliſhed,

the more lustre they receive. Such is the difference betwixt Virgil's Æneis, and Marini's Adone. And, if I may be allowed to change the metaphor, I would say, that Virgil is like the Fame which he describes;

Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo.

Such a sort of reputation is my aim, though in a far inferior degree, according to my motto in the title page;

—*Sequiturque patrem non passibus æquis :*

And therefore, I appeal to the highest court of judicature, like that of the peers, of which your lordship is so great an ornament.

Without this ambition which I own, of desiring to please the Judices Natos, I could never have been able to have done any thing at this age, when the fire of poetry is commonly extinguished in other men. Yet Virgil has given me the example of Entellus for my encouragement : when he was well heated, the younger champion could not stand before him. And we find the elder contended not for the gift, but for the honour ; *Nec dona moror*. For Dampier has informed us, in his voyages, that the air of the country which produces gold, is never wholsom.

I had long since considered, that the way to please the best judges, is not to translate a poet literally; and Virgil least of any other. For his peculiar beauty lying in his choice of words, I am excluded from it by the narrow compass of our heroic verse, unless I would make use of monosyllables only, and those clogged with consonants, which are the dead weight of our mother-tongue. It is possible, I confess, tho' it rarely happens, that a verse of monosyllables may

found harmoniously; and some examples of it I have seen. My first line of the *Æneis* is not harsh:—

Arms, and the man I sing, who forc'd by fate, etc.

But a much better instance may be given from the last line of *Manilius*, made English by our learned and judicious Mr. Creech.

Nor cou'd the world have born so fierce a flame.

Where the many liquid consonants are placed so artfully, that they give a pleasing sound to the words, though they are all of one syllable.

It is true, I have been sometimes forced upon it in our other places of this work, but I never did it out of choice: I was either in haste, or Virgil gave me no occasion for the ornament of words; for it seldom happens but a monosyllable line turns verse to prose, and even that prose is rugged and unharmonious. Philarchus, I remember, taxes Balzac for placing twenty monosyllables in file, without one dissyllable betwixt them. The way I have taken is not so straight as metaphrase, nor so loose as paraphrase: some things too I have omitted, and sometimes have added of my own. Yet the omissions, I hope, are but of circumstances, and such as would have no grace in English; and the additions, I also hope, are easily deduced from Virgil's sense. They will seem (at least I have the vanity to think so) not stuck into him, but growing out of him. He studies brevity more than any other poet, but he had the advantage of a language wherein much may be comprehended in a little space. We, and all the modern tongues, have more articles and pronouns, besides signs of tenses and cases, and other barbarities on which our speech is built by the faults of our fore-fathers. The Romans founded theirs upon the

Greek: And the Greeks, we know, were labouring many hundred years upon their language, before they brought it to perfection. They rejected all those signs, and cut off as many articles as they could spare; comprehending in one word, what we are constrained to express in two; which is one reason why we cannot write so concisely as they have done. The word *Pater*, for example, signifies not only a father, but your father, my father, his or her father, all included in a word.

This inconvenience is common to all modern tongues, and this alone constrains us to employ more words than the ancients needed. But having before observed, that Virgil endeavours to be short, and at the same time elegant, I pursue the excellence, and forsake the brevity. For there is he like ambergrease, a rich perfume, but of so close and glutinous a body, that it must be opened with inferior scents of musk or civet, or the sweetness will not be drawn out into another language.

On the whole matter, I thought fit to steer betwixt the two extremes, of paraphrase, and literal translation: to keep as near my author as I could, without losing all his graces, the most eminent of which are in the beauty of his words: and those words, I must add, are always figurative. Such of these as would retain their elegance in our tongue, I have endeavoured to graft on it; but most of them are of necessity to be lost, because they will not shine in any but their own. Virgil has sometimes two of them in a line; but the scantiness of our heroic verse is not capable of receiving more than one: and that too must expiate for many others which have none. Such is the difference of the languages, or such my want of skill in chusing words. Yet I may

presume to say, and I hope with as much reason as the French translator, that, taking all the materials of this divine author, I have endeavoured to make Virgil speak such English, as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England, and in this present age. I acknowledge, with Ségrais, that I have not succeeded in this attempt, according to my desire: yet I shall not be wholly without praise, if in some sort I may be allowed to have copied the clearness, the purity, the easiness, and the magnificence of his style. But I shall have occasion to speak farther on this subject, before I end the preface.

When I mentioned the Pindaric line, I should have added, that I take another licence in my verses: for I frequently make use of triplet rhimes, and for the same reason; because they bound the sense. And therefore, I generally join these two licences together; and make the last verse of the triplet a Pindaric: for besides the majesty which it gives, it confines the sense within the barriers of three lines, which would languish if it were lengthened into four. Spenser is my example for both these privileges of English verses. And Chapman has followed him in his translation of Homer. Mr. Cowley has given in to them after both, and all succeeding writers after him. I regard them now as the Magna Charta of heroic poetry; and am too much an Englishman to lose what my ancestors have gained for me. Let the French and Italians value themselves on their regularity: strength and elevation are our standard. I said before, and I repeat it, that the affected purity of the French has unfinewed their heroic verse. The language of an epic poem is almost wholly figurative: yet they are so fearful of a metaphor, that no example of Virgil can encourage them to be bold with safety. Sure they might warm themselves by that

spirightly blaze, without approaching it so close as to singe their wings; they may come as near it as their master. Not that I would discourage that purity of diction, in which he excels all other poets. But he knows how far to extend his franchises: and advances to the verge, without venturing a foot beyond it. On the other side, without being injurious to the memory of our English Pindar, I will presume to say, that his metaphors are sometimes too violent, and his language is not always pure. But at the same time, I must excuse him. For through the iniquity of the times, he was forced to travel, at an age, when, instead of learning foreign languages, he should have studied the beauties of his mother-tongue: Which, like all other speeches, is to be cultivated early, or we shall never write it with any kind of elegance. Thus, by gaining abroad, he lost at home: like the painter in the Arcadia, who going to see a skirmish, had his arms loped off; and returned, says Sir Philip Sidney, well instructed how to draw a battle, but without a hand to perform his work.

There is another thing in which I have presumed to deviate from him and Spenser. They both make hemisticks (or half verses) breaking off in the middle of a line. I confess there are not many such in the Fairy Queen: and even those few might be occasioned by his unhappy choice of so long a stanza. Mr. Cowley had found out, that no kind of staff is proper for an heroic poem; as being all too lyrical: yet though he wrote in couplets, where rhyme is freer from constraint, he frequently affects half verses; of which we find not one in Homer, and I think not in any of the Greek poets, or the Latin, excepting only Virgil; and there is no question but he thought he had Virgil's authority for that license.

But I am confident, our poet never meant to leave him or any other such a precedent. And I ground my opinion on these two reasons. First, we find no example of a hemistich in any of his Pastorals or Georgics. For he had given the last finishing strokes to both these poems: but his *Æneis* he left so uncorrect, at least so short of that perfection at which he aimed, that we know how hard a sentence he passed upon it: And in the second place, I reasonably presume, that he intended to have filled up all those hemistichs, because in one of them we find the sense imperfect.

Quem tibi jam Troja,

Which some foolish grammarian has ended for him with a half line of nonsense;

peperit fumante Creusa.

For Ascanius must have been born some years before the burning of that city; which I need not prove. On the other side, we find also, that he himself filled up one line in the sixth *Æneid*, the enthusiasm seizing him, while he was reading to Augustus.

*Misenum Æolidem, quo non præstantior alter
Ære ciere viros*

To which he added in that transport,

Martemque accendere cantu:

And never was any line more nobly finished; for the reasons which I have given in the book of painting. On these considerations I have shunned hemistichs: not being willing to imitate Virgil to a fault; like Alexander's courtiers, who affected to hold their necks awry, because he could not help it: I am confident your lordship is by this time of my opinion;

and that you will look on those half lines hereafter, as the imperfect products of a hasty muse: like the frogs and serpents in the Nile; part of them kindled into life, and part a lump of unformed unanimated mud.

I am sensible that many of my whole verses are as imperfect as those halves, for want of time to digest them better: but give me leave to make the excuse of Boccace; who, when he was upbraided, that some of his novels had not the spirit of the rest, returned this answer; that Charlemain, who made the Palladins, was never able to raise an army of them. The leaders may be heroes, but the multitude must consist of common men.

I am also bound to tell your lordship, in my own defence; that from the beginning of the first Georgic to the end of the last Æneid, I found the difficulty of translation growing on me in every succeeding book. For Virgil, above all poets, had a stock, which I may call almost inexhaustible, of figurative, elegant, and sounding words. I who inherit but a small portion of his genius, and write in a language so much inferior to the Latin, have found it very painful to vary phrases, when the same sense returns upon me. Even he himself, whether out of necessity or choice, has often expressed the same thing in the same words; and often repeated two or three whole verses, which he had used before. Words are not so easily coined as money: and yet we see that the credit not only of banks, but of exchequers, cracks, when little comes in, and much goes out. Virgil called upon me in every line for some new word: and I paid so long, that I was almost bankrupt. So that the latter end must needs be more burdensom than the beginning or the middle. And consequently the twelfth Æneid cost me double the

time of the first and second. What had become of me, if Virgil had taxed me with another book? I had certainly been reduced to pay the public in hammered money for want of milled; that is, in the same old words which I had used before: and the receivers must have been forced to have taken any thing, where there was so little to be had.

Besides this difficulty (with which I have struggled, and made a shift to pass it over) there is one remaining, which is insuperable to all translators. We are bound to our author's sense, though with the latitudes already mentioned, (for I think it not so sacred, as that one iota must not be added or diminished, on pain of an anathema.) But slaves we are, and labour on another man's plantation; we dress the vineyard, but the wine is the owner's: if the soil be sometimes barren, then we are sure of being scourged: if it be fruitful, and our care succeeds, we are not thanked; for the proud reader will only say, the poor drudge has done his duty. But this is nothing to what follows; for being obliged to make his sense intelligible, we are forced to untune our own verses, that we may give his meaning to the reader. He who invents, is master of his thoughts and words; he can turn and vary them as he pleases, till he renders them harmonious. But the wretched translator has no such privilege: for being tied to the thoughts, he must make what music he can in the expression. And for this reason, it cannot always be so sweet as that of the original. There is a beauty of sound, as Segrais has observed, in some Latin words, which is wholly lost in any modern language. He instances in that *Mollis Amaracus*, on which Venus lays Cupid in the first *Æneid*. If I should translate it *Sweet-Marjoram*, as the word signifies; the reader would think I had mistaken Virgil: for those vil-

large-words, as I may call them, give us a mean idea of the thing; but the sound of the Latin is so much more pleasing, by the just mixture of the vowels with the consonants, that it raises our fancies, to conceive somewhat more noble than a common herb; and to spread roses under him, and strew lillies over him; a bed not unworthy the grandson of the goddess.

If I cannot copy his harmonious numbers, how shall I imitate his noble sights; where his thoughts and words are equally sublime?

Quem quisquis studet æmulari,

—ceratis ope Dædalææ

Nititur pennis, vitreo daturus

Namini, pontæ.

What modern language, or what poet can express the majestic beauty of this one verse amongst a thousand others!

Aude hospes contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum

Finge Deo, —

For my part, I am lost in the admiration of it: I contemn the world, when I think on it, and myself when I translate it.

Lay by Virgil, I beseech your lordship, and all my better sort of judges, when you take up my version, and it will appear a passable beauty when the original muse is absent: but like Spenser's false Florimel made of snow, it melts and vanishes when the true one comes in sight. I will not excuse but justify myself for one pretended crime, with which I am liable to be charged by false critics, not only in this translation, but in many of my original poems; that I Latinize too much. It is true, that when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither

borrow from the Latin, or any other language; but when I want at home, I must seek abroad.

If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation, which is never to return: but what I bring from Italy, I spend in England: here it remains, and here it circulates; for if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament, and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables; therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized, by using it myself; and if the public approves of it, the bill passes. But every man cannot distinguish betwixt pedantry and poetry: every man therefore is not fit to innovate. Upon the whole matter, a poet must first be certain that the word he would introduce is beautiful in the Latin; and is to consider, in the next place, whether it will agree with the English idiom: After this, he ought to take the opinion of judicious friends, such as are learned in both languages: And lastly, since no man is infallible, let him use this licence very sparingly; for if too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.

I am now drawing towards a conclusion, and suspect your lordship is very glad of it. But permit me first, to own what helps I have had in this undertaking. The late earl of Lauderdale sent me over his new translation of the *Æneis*; which he had ended

before I engaged in the same design. Neither did I then intend it: but some proposals being afterwards made me by my bookseller, I desired his lordship's leave, that I might accept them, which he freely granted; and I have his letter yet to shew, for that permission. He resolved to have printed his work; which he might have done two years before I could publish mine: and had performed it, if death had not prevented him. But having his manuscript in my hands, I consulted it as often as I doubted of my author's sense. For no man understood Virgil better than that learned nobleman. His friends, I hear, have yet another, and more correct, copy of that translation by them, which had they pleased to have given the public, the judges must have been convinced that I have not flattered him. Besides this help, which was not inconsiderable, Mr. Congreve has done me the favour to review the *Æneis*; and compare my version with the original. I shall never be ashamed to own, that this excellent young man has shewed me many faults, which I have endeavoured to correct. It is true, he might have easily found more, and then my translation had been more perfect.

Two other worthy friends of mine, who desire to have their names concealed, seeing me straitened in my time, took pity on me, and gave me the life of Virgil, the two prefaces to the *Pastorals*, and the *Georgics*, and all the arguments in prose to the whole translation. Which, perhaps, has caused a report, that the two first poems are not mine. If it had been true, that I had taken their verses for my own, I might have gloried in their aid; and, like Terence, have fathered the opinion, that Scipio and Laelius joined with me. But the same stile being continued through the whole, and the same laws of versificati-

on observed, are proofs sufficient, that this is one man's work: and your lordship is too well acquainted with my manner, to doubt that any part of it is another's.

That your lordship may see I was in earnest, when I promised to hasten to an end, I will not give the reasons, why I writ not always in the proper terms of navigation, land-service, or in the cant of any profession. I will only say, that Virgil has avoided those proprieties, because he writ not to mariners, soldiers, astronomers, gardeners, peasants, etc. but to all in general, and in particular to men and ladies of the first quality; who have been better bred than to be too nicely knowing in the terms. In such cases, it is enough for a poet to write so plainly, that he may be understood by his readers; to avoid impropriety, and not affect to be thought learned in all things.

I have omitted the four preliminary lines of the first *Æneid*; because I think them inferior to any four others in the whole poem; and consequently, believe they are not Virgil's. There is too great a gap betwixt the adjective *vicina* in the second line, and the substantive *arva* in the latter end of the third, which keeps his meaning in obscurity too long; and is contrary to the clearness of his stile.

Ut quamvis avido

is too ambitious an ornament to be his, and

Gratum opus Agricolis,

are all words unnecessary, and independent of what he had said before.

Horrentia Martis arma,

is worse than any of the rest. *Horrentia* is such a flat epithet, as Tully would have given us in his

verses. It is a mere filler, to stop a vacancy in the hexameter, and connect the preface to the work of Virgil. Our author seems to sound a charge, and begins like the clangour of a trumpet;

Arma, virumque cano; Trojæ qui primus ab oris.

Scarce a word without an *A*, and the vowels for the greater part sonorous. The prefacer began with *Ille ego*, which he was constrained to patch up in the fourth line with *At nunc*, to make the sense cohere. And if both those words are not notorious botches, I am much deceived, though the French translator thinks otherwise. For my own part, I am rather of the opinion, that they were added by Tucca and Varius, than retrenched.

I know it may be answered by such as think Virgil the author of the four lines; that he asserts his title to the *Æneis*, in the beginning of this work, as he did to the two former, in the last lines of the fourth *Georgic*. I will not reply otherwise to this, than by desiring them to compare these four lines with the four others; which we know are his, because no poet but he alone could write them. If they cannot distinguish creeping from flying, let them lay down Virgil, and take Ovid de Ponto in his stead. My master needed not the assistance of that preliminary poet to prove his claim. His own majestic meen discovers him to be the king, amidst a thousand courtiers. It was a superfluous office, and therefore, I would not set those verses in the front of Virgil; but have rejected them to my own preface.

*I, who before, with shepherds in the groves,
Sung to my oaten pipe their rural loves,
And issuing thence, compell'd the neighb'ring field
A plenteous crop of rising corn to yield.*

*Manur'd the glebe, and stock'd the fruitful plain,
(A poem grateful to the greedy swain,) etc.*

If there be not a tolerable line in all these six, the prefacer gave me no occasion to write better. This is a just apology in this place. But I have done great wrong to Virgil in the whole translation: want of time, the inferiority of our language, the inconvenience of rhyme, and all the other excuses I have made, may alleviate my fault, but cannot justify the boldness of my undertaking. What avails it me to acknowledge freely, that I have not been able to do him right in any line? For even my own confession makes against me; and it will always be returned upon me, Why then did you attempt it? To which no other answer can be made, than that I have done him less injury than any of his former libellers.

What they called his picture, had been drawn at length, so many times, by the daubers of almost all nations, and still so unlike him, that I snatched up the pencil with disdain: being satisfied before-hand, that I could make some small resemblance of him, though I must be content with a worse likeness. A sixth pastoral, a Pharmaceutria, a single Orpheus, and some other features, have been exactly taken: but those Holiday-authors write for pleasure; and only shewed us what they could have done, if they would have taken pains to perform the whole.

Be pleased, My lord, to accept with your wonted goodness, this unworthy present which I make you. I have taken off one trouble from you, of defending it, by acknowledging its imperfections: and though some part of them are covered in the verse; (as Eriethonius rode always in a chariot, to hide his lameness) such of them as cannot be concealed, you will

please to connive at, though in the strictness of your judgment, you cannot pardon. If Homer was allowed to nod sometimes, in so long a work, it will be no wonder if I often fall asleep. You took my Aureng-zeb into your protection, with all his faults; and I hope here cannot be so many, because I translate an author, who gives me such examples of correctness. What my jury may be, I know not; but it is good for a criminal to plead before a favourable judge: if I had said partial, would your lordship have forgiven me? Or will you give me leave to acquaint the world, that I have many times been obliged to your bounty since the revolution? Though I never was reduced to beg a charity, nor ever had the impudence to ask one, either of your lordship, or your noble kinsman the earl of Dorset, much less of any other; yet when I least expected it, you have both remembered me. So inherent it is in your family, not to forget an old servant. It looks rather like ingratitude on my part, that where I have been so often obliged, I have appeared so seldom to return my thanks; and where I was also so sure of being well received. Somewhat of laziness was in the case; and somewhat too of modesty: but nothing of disrespect, or unthankfulness. I will not say that your lordship has encouraged me to this presumption, lest if my labours meet with no success in public, I may expose your judgment to be censured. As for my own enemies, I shall never think them worth an answer; and if your lordship has any, they will not dare to arraign you for want of knowledge in this art, till they can produce somewhat better of their own, than your Essay on Poetry. It was on this consideration, that I have drawn out my preface to so great a length. Had I not addressed to a

poet, and a critic of the first magnitude, I had myself been taxed for want of judgment, and shamed my patron for want of understanding. But neither will you, my lord, so soon be tired as any other, because the discourse is on your art: neither will the learned reader think it tedious, because it is *ad clerum*. At least, when he begins to be weary, the church doors are open. That I may pursue the allegory with a short prayer, after a long sermon:

May you live happily and long, for the service of your country, the encouragement of good letters, and the ornament of poetry; which cannot be wished more earnestly by any man, than by

Your Lordship's

Most humble, most obliged,

And most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

A
DISCOURSE;*

CONTAINING A

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BETWIXT

POETRY and PAINTING.

* Originally prefixed to his translation of Fresnoy's Art
of Painting.

DISCOURSE*

CONTAINING

PARALLEL



POETRY and PAINTING.

Originally printed by the Association of Friends of the
of Painting.

P A R A L L E L

B E T W I X T

P O E T R Y and P A I N T I N G.

IT may be reasonably expected, that I should say something on my behalf, in respect to my present undertaking. First then, the reader may be pleased to know, that it was not of my own choice that I undertook this work. Many of our most skilful painters, and other artists, were pleased to recommend this author to me, as one who perfectly understood the rules of painting; who gave the best and most concise instructions for performance, and the surest to inform the judgment of all who loved this noble art: that they who before were rather fond of it, than knowingly admired it, might defend their inclination by their reason: that they might understand those excellencies which they blindly valued, so as not to be farther imposed on by bad pieces, and to know when nature was well imitated by the most able masters. It is true indeed, and they acknowledge it, that, beside the rules which are given in this treatise, or which can be given in any other, to make a perfect judgment of good pictures, and to value them more or less, when compared with one

another, there is farther required a long conversation with the best pieces, which are not very frequent either in France or England; yet some we have, not only from the hands of Holbein, Rubens, and Vanduyck, (one of them admirable for history-painting, and the other two for portraits) but of many Flemish masters, and those not inconsiderable, though for design, not equal to the Italians. And of these latter also, we are not unfurnished with some pieces of Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Michael Angelo, and others. But to return to my own undertaking of this translation, I freely own, that I thought myself incapable of performing it, either to their satisfaction, or my own credit. Not but that I understood the original Latin, and the French author, perhaps as well as most Englishmen: but I was not sufficiently versed in the terms of art: and therefore thought, that many of those persons, who put this honourable task on me, were more able to perform it themselves, as undoubtedly they were. But they assuring me of their assistance, in correcting my faults, where I spoke improperly, I was encouraged to attempt it; that I might not be wanting in what I could, to satisfy the desires of so many gentlemen, who were willing to give the world this useful work. They have effectually performed their promise to me; and I have been as careful on my side, to take their advice in all things; so that the reader may assure himself of a tolerable translation: not elegant, for I proposed not that to myself: but familiar, clear and instructive. In any of which parts, if I have failed, the fault lies wholly at my door. In this one particular only, I must beg the reader's pardon. The prose translation of the poem, is not free from poetical expressions, and I dare not promise that some of them are not fustian, or at least highly me-

taphorical; but this being a fault in the first digestion (that is, the original Latin) was not to be remedied in the second; viz. the translation. And I may confidently say, that whoever had attempted it must have fallen into the same inconvenience, or a much greater, that of a false version. When I undertook this work, I was already engaged in the translation of Virgil, from whom I have borrowed only two months: and am now returning to that, which I ought to understand better. In the mean time, I beg the reader's pardon, for entertaining him so long with myself: It is an usual part of ill manners in all authors, and almost in all mankind, to trouble others, with their business; and I was so sensible of it beforehand, that I had not now committed it, unless some concerns of the readers had been interwoven with my own. But I know not, while I am attoning for one error, if I am not falling into another: for I have been importuned to say something farther of this art; and to make some observations on it, in relation to the likeness and agreement which it has with poetry its sister. But before I proceed, it will not be amiss, if I copy from Bellori, (a most ingenious author) some part of his idea of a painter, which cannot be unpleasing, at least to such who are conversant in the philosophy of Plato. And to avoid tediousness, I will not translate the whole discourse, but take, and leave, as I find occasion.

' God Almighty, in the fabric of the universe,
' first contemplated himself, and reflected on his
' own excellencies; from which he drew, and con-
' stituted those first forms, which are called Ideas.
' So that every species, which was afterwards expres-
' sed, was produced from that first idea, forming that

' wonderful contexture of all created beings. But
 ' the coelestial bodies above the moon being incor-
 ' ruptible, and not subject to change, remained for
 ' ever fair, and in perpetual order. On the contra-
 ' ry, all things which are sublunary are subject to
 ' change, to deformity, and to decay. And though
 ' nature always intends a consummate beauty in her
 ' productions, yet through the inequality of the
 ' matter, the forms are altered; and in particular,
 ' human beauty suffers alteration for the worse, as
 ' we see to our mortification, in the deformities, and
 ' disproportions which are in us. For which reason,
 ' the artful painter, and the sculptor, imitating the
 ' divine maker, form to themselves, as well as they
 ' are able, a model of the superior beauties; and re-
 ' flecting on them endeavour to correct and amend
 ' the common nature; and to represent it as it was
 ' first created, without fault, either in colour or in
 ' lineament.

' This Idea, which we may call the goddess of
 ' painting and of sculpture, descends upon the mar-
 ' ble and the cloth, and becomes the original of
 ' those arts; and being measured by the compass of
 ' the intellect, is itself the measure of the performing
 ' hand; and being animated by the imagination,
 ' infuses life into the image. The idea of the paint-
 ' er, and the sculptor, is undoubtedly that perfect
 ' and excellent example of the mind, by imitation
 ' of which imagined form, all things are represented
 ' which fall under human sight: such is the definiti-
 ' on which is made by Cicero in his book of the O-
 ' rator to Brutus. " As therefore in forms and fi-
 ' gures, there is somewhat which is excellent and
 ' perfect, to which imagined species all things are
 ' referred by imitation, which are the objects of
 ' sight; in like manner, we behold the species of

“ eloquence in our minds, the effigies, or actual i-
 “ mage of which, we seek in the organs of our hear-
 “ ing. This is likewise confirmed by Proclus, in
 “ the dialogue of Plato, called Timæus: If, says
 “ he, you take a man, as he is made by nature, and
 “ compare him with another who is the effect of
 “ art; the work of nature will always appear the
 “ less beautiful, because art is more accurate than
 “ nature.” “ But Zeuxis, who from the choice
 “ which he made of five virgins, drew that wonder-
 “ ful picture of Helena, which Cicero, in his Orator
 “ before-mentioned, sets before us, as the most per-
 “ fect example of beauty, at the same time admo-
 “ nishes a painter, to contemplate the ideas of the
 “ most natural forms; and to make a judicious
 “ choice of several bodies, all of them the most ele-
 “ gant which he can find. By which we may plainly
 “ understand, that he thought it impossible to find in
 “ any one body all those perfections which he
 “ sought, for the accomplishment of a Helena; be-
 “ cause nature in any individual person makes no-
 “ thing that is perfect in all its parts. For this rea-
 “ son, Maximus Tyrius also says, that the image,
 “ which is taken by a painter from several bodies,
 “ produces a beauty, which it is impossible to find
 “ in any single natural body, approaching to the
 “ perfection of the fairest statues. Thus nature,
 “ on this account, is so much inferior to art, that
 “ those artists who propose to themselves only the i-
 “ mitation or likeness of such or such a particular
 “ person, without election of those ideas before-men-
 “ tioned, have often been reproached for that omis-
 “ sion. Demetrius was taxed for being too natural;
 “ Dionysius was also blamed for drawing men like

' us, and was commonly called *Ανδραγωγός*,
 ' that is, a painter of men. In our times, Michael
 ' Angelo da Caravaggio was esteemed too natural.
 ' He drew persons as they were; and Bamboccio,
 ' and most of the Dutch painters, have drawn the
 ' worst likenesses. Lyfippus of old upbraided the
 ' common sort of sculptors, for making men such
 ' as they were found in nature; and boasted of him-
 ' self, that he made them as they ought to be: which
 ' is a precept of Aristotle, given as well to poets, as
 ' to painters. Phidias raised an admiration even to
 ' astonishment, in those who beheld his statues,
 ' with the forms which he gave to his gods and he-
 ' roes; by imitating the idea, rather than nature.
 ' And Cicero, speaking of him, affirms, that figuring
 ' Jupiter and Pallas, he did not contemplate any ob-
 ' ject from whence he took any likeness, but confi-
 ' dered in his own mind a great and admirable form
 ' of beauty, and according to that image in his
 ' soul, he directed the operation of his hand. Seneca
 ' also seems to wonder, that Phidias having never
 ' beheld either Jove or Pallas, yet could conceive
 ' their divine images in his mind. Apollonius Ty-
 ' anaeus says the same in other words, that the
 ' fancy more instructs the painter, than the imitati-
 ' on; for the last makes only the things which it
 ' sees, but the first makes also the things which it
 ' never sees.

' Leon Battista Alberti tells us, that we ought
 ' not so much to love the likeness as the beauty, and
 ' to choose from the fairest bodies severally the fair-
 ' est parts. Leonardo da Vinci instructs the painter
 ' to form this Idea to himself: and Raphael, the
 ' greatest of all modern masters, writes thus to Ca-
 ' stiglione, concerning his Galatea: " To paint a
 " fair one, it is necessary for me to see many fair

"ones; but because there is so great a scarcity
 "of lovely women, I am constrained to make use
 "of one certain Idea, which I have formed to my-
 "self in my own fancy." Guido Reni sending to
 "Rome his St. Michael, which he had painted for
 "the church of the Capuchins, at the same time
 "wrote to Monsignor Massano, who was Maestro
 "di Casa (or steward of the house) to Pope Urban
 "the eighth, in this manner. I wish I had the wings
 "of an angel, to have ascended into paradise, and
 "there to have beheld the forms of those beatifi-
 "ed spirits, from which I might have copied my
 "Archangel. But not being able to mount so high,
 "it was in vain for me to search his resemblance
 "here below: so that I was forced to make an intro-
 "spection into my own mind, and into that idea of
 "beauty, which I have formed in my own imagina-
 "tion. I have likewise created there the contrary
 "idea of deformity and ugliness; but I leave the
 "consideration of it, till I paint the devil: and in
 "the mean time, shun the very thought of it, as
 "much as possibly I can, and am even endeavour-
 "ing to blot it wholly out of my remembrance.
 "There was not any lady in all antiquity, who was
 "mistress of so much beauty, as was to be found in
 "the Venus of Gnidos, made by Praxiteles; or the
 "Minerva of Athens, by Phidias; which was there-
 "fore called The beautiful form. Neither is there
 "any man of the present age, equal in the strength,
 "proportion, and knitting of his limbs, to the
 "Hercules of Farnese, made by Glycon: or any wo-
 "man who can justly be compared with the Medice-
 "an Venus, of Eleomenes. And upon this account,
 "the noblest poets, and the best orators, when they
 "desired to celebrate any extraordinary beauty, are

‘ forced to have recourse to statues and pictures, and
 ‘ to draw their persons and faces into comparison.
 ‘ Ovid, endeavouring to express the beauty of Gil-
 ‘ larus, the fairest of the Centaures, celebrates him
 ‘ as next in perfection, to the most admirable statues.

Gratus in ore vigor, cervix, humerique manusque,
 Pectoraque artificum laudatis proxima signis.

*A pleasing vigour his fair face express'd;
 His neck, his hands, his shoulders, and his breasts,
 Did next in gratefulness, and beauty, stand
 To breathing figures of the sculptor's hand.*

‘ In another place he sets Apelles above Venus.

Si Venerem Cois nunquam pinxisset Apelles,
 Mersa sub aquoreis ille lateret aquis.

Thus varied.

One birth to Jove the Cyprian goddess ow'd,

A second birth the painter's art bestow'd:

Left by the seas than by his pow'r was given;

They made her live, but he advanc'd to heav'n.

‘ The idea of this beauty is indeed various, ac-
 ‘ cording to the several forms which the painter or
 ‘ sculptor would describe: as one in strength, ano-
 ‘ ther in magnanimity; and sometimes it consists
 ‘ in cheerfulness, and sometimes in delicacy; and
 ‘ is always diversified by the sex and age.

‘ The beauty of Jove is one, and that of Juno
 ‘ another; Hercules, and Cupid, are perfect beauties,
 ‘ though of different kinds: for beauty is only that
 ‘ which makes all things as they are in their proper
 ‘ and perfect nature; which the best painters al-
 ‘ ways choose, by contemplating the forms of each.
 ‘ We ought farther to consider, that a picture being

the representation of a human action, the painter ought to retain, in his mind, the examples of all affections, and passions; as a poet preserves the idea of an angry man, of one who is fearful, sad, or merry, and so of all the rest. For it is impossible to express that with the hand, which never entered into the imagination. In this manner, as I have rudely and briefly shewn you, painters and sculptors, choosing the most elegant natural beauties, perfectionate the idea, and advance their art, even above nature itself, in her individual productions, which is the utmost mastery of human performance.

From hence arises that astonishment, and almost adoration, which is paid by the knowing, to those divine remains of antiquity. From hence Phidias, Lyfippus, and other noble sculptors, are still held in veneration; and Apelles, Zeuxis, Protogenes, and other admirable painters, though their works are perished, are, and will be, eternally admired; who all of them drew after the ideas of perfection; which are the miracles of nature, the providence of the understanding, the exemplars of the mind, the light of the fancy; the sun which from its rising inspired the statue of Memnon, and the fire which warmed into life the image of Prometheus: It is this which causes the Graces, and the Loves, to take up their habitations in the hardest marble, and to subsist in the emptiness of light, and shadows. But since the idea of eloquence is as inferior to that of painting, as the force of words is to the sight; I must here break off abruptly, and having conducted the reader as it were to a secret walk, there leave him in the midst of silence to

you to direct them to what is most useful of most

‘ contemplate those ideas, which I have only sketch-
‘ ed, and which every man must finish for himself.’

In these pompous expressions, or such as these, the Italian has given you his idea of a painter; and though I cannot much commend the stile, I must needs say, there is somewhat in the matter: Plato himself is accustomed to write loftily, imitating, as the critics tell us, the manner of Homer; but surely that inimitable poet had not so much of smoke in his writings, though not less of fire. But in short, this is the present genius of Italy. What Philostratus tells us, in the proem of his figures, is somewhat plainer; and therefore, I will translate it almost word for word. “ He, who will rightly govern the
“ art of painting, ought of necessity first to under-
“ stand human nature. He ought likewise to be en-
“ dued with a genius to express the signs of their
“ passions whom he represents; and to make the
“ dumb as it were to speak: he must yet farther un-
“ derstand what is contained in the constitution
“ of the cheeks, in the temperament of the eyes, in
“ the naturalness (if I may so call it) of the eye-
“ brows: and in short, whatsoever belongs to the
“ mind and thought. He, who thoroughly possesses
“ all these things, will obtain the whole: and the
“ hand will exquisitely represent the action of every
“ particular person. If it happens that he be ei-
“ ther mad or angry, melancholic or chearful, a
“ sprightly youth, or a languishing lover; in one
“ word, he will be able to paint whatsoever is pro-
“ portionable to any one. And even in all this, there
“ is a sweet error without causing any shame. For
“ the eyes and minds of the beholders, being fa-
“ stened on objects which have no real being, as if
“ they were truly existent, and being induced by
“ them to believe them so, what pleasure is it not

capable of giving! The ancients, and other wise men, have written many things concerning the symmetry, which is in the art of painting; constituting as it were some certain laws for the proportion of every member; not thinking it possible for a painter to undertake the expression of those motions which are in the mind, without a concurrent harmony in the natural measure. For that, which is out of its own kind and measure, is not received from nature, whose motion is always right. On a serious consideration of this matter, it will be found, that the art of painting has a wonderful affinity with that of poetry; and that there is betwixt them a certain common imagination. For, as the poets introduce the gods and heroes, and all those things which are either majestic, honest, or delightful; in like manner, the painters, by the virtue of their out-lines, colours, lights, and shadows, represent the same things and persons in their pictures.

Thus, as convoy ships either accompany, or should accompany their merchants, till they may prosecute the rest of their voyage, without danger; so Philostratus has brought me thus far on my way, and I can now sail on without him. He has begun to speak of the great relation betwixt painting and poetry, and thither the greatest part of this discourse, by my promise, was directed. I have not engaged myself to any perfect method, neither am I loaded with a full cargo. It is sufficient, if I bring a sample of some goods in this voyage. It will be easy for others to add more, when the commerce is settled. For a treatise, twice as large as this of painting, could not contain all that might be said on the parallel of these two sister-arts. I will take my rise

from Bellori, before I proceed to the author of this book.

The business of his preface is to prove, that a learned painter should form to himself an idea of perfect nature. This image he is to set before his mind in all his undertakings; and to draw from thence, as from a store-house, the beauties which are to enter into his work; thereby correcting nature from what actually she is in individuals, to what she ought to be, and what she was created. Now as this idea of perfection is of little use in portraits (or the resemblances of particular persons) so neither is it in the characters of comedy; and tragedy; which are never to be made perfect, but always to be drawn with some specks of frailty and deficiency; such as they have been described to us in history, if they were real characters; or such as the poet began to shew them, at their first appearance, if they were only fictitious, (or imaginary.) The perfection of such stage-characters consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient faulty nature, which is their original. Only (as it is observed more at large hereafter) in such cases, there will always be found a better likeness; and a worse; and the better is constantly to be chosen: I mean in tragedy, which represents the figures of the highest form amongst mankind. Thus in portraits, the painter will not take that side of the face which has some notorious blemish in it; but either draw it in profile (as Apelles did Antigonus, who had lost one of his eyes) or else shadow the more imperfect side. For, an ingenious flattery is to be allowed to the professors of both arts; so long as the likeness is not destroyed. It is true, that all manner of imperfections must not be taken away from the characters; and the reason is, that there may be left some grounds of pity for their misfor-

runes. We can never be grieved for their miseries who are thoroughly wicked, and have thereby justly called their calamities on themselves. Such men are the natural objects of our hatred, not of our commiseration. If, on the other side, their characters were wholly perfect, (such as for example, the character of a saint, or martyr in a play) his, or her misfortunes, would produce impious thoughts in the beholders: they would accuse the heavens of injustice, and think of leaving a religion, where piety was so ill requited. I say the greater part would be tempted so to do: I say not that they ought: and the consequence is too dangerous for the practice. In this I have accused myself, for my own *St. Catherine*; but let truth prevail. *Sophocles* has taken the just medium in his *Oedipus*. He is somewhat arrogant at his first entrance, and is too inquisitive through the whole tragedy: yet these imperfections being balanced by great virtues, they hinder not our compassion for his miseries; neither yet can they destroy that horror, which the nature of his crimes has excited in us. Such in painting are the warts and moles, which, adding a likeness to the face, are not therefore to be omitted; but these produce no loathing in us. But how far to proceed, and where to stop, is left to the judgment of the poet, and the painter. In comedy, there is somewhat more of the worse likeness to be taken. Because that is often to produce laughter; which is occasioned by the sight of some deformity: but for this I refer the reader to *Aristotle*. It is a sharp manner of instruction for the vulgar, who are never well amended, till they are more than sufficiently exposed. That I may return to the beginning of this remark, concerning perfect ideas, I have only this to say, that the Parallel is often true in epic poetry.

The heroes of the poets are to be drawn according to this rule. There is scarce a frailty to be left in the best of them; any more than is to be found in a divine nature. And if *Aeneas* sometimes weeps, it is not in bemoaning his own miseries, but those which his people undergo. If this be an imperfection, the Son of God, when he was incarnate, shed tears of compassion over Jerusalem. And *Lentulus* describes him often weeping, but never laughing; so that *Virgil* is justified even from the holy scriptures. I have but one word more, which for once I will anticipate from the author of this book. Though it must be an idea of perfection, from which both the epic poet, and the history painter draws; yet all perfections are not suitable to all subjects: but every one must be designed according to that perfect beauty which is proper to him. An *Apollo* must be distinguished from a *Jupiter*; a *Pallas* from a *Venus*; and so in poetry, an *Aeneas* from any other hero: for piety is his chief perfection. Homer's *Achilles* is a kind of exception to this rule: but then he is not a perfect hero, nor so intended by the poet. All his gods had somewhat of human imperfection; for which he has been taxed by *Plato*, as an imitator of what was bad. But *Virgil* observed his fault, and mended it. Yet *Achilles* was perfect in the strength of his body, and the vigour of his mind. Had he been less passionate, or less revengeful, the poet well foresaw that *Hector* had been killed, and *Troy* taken at the first assault; which had destroyed the beautiful contrivance of his *Iliad*, and the moral, of preventing discord amongst confederate princes; which was his principal intention. For the moral (as *Bosin* observes) is the first business of the poet, as being the ground-work of his instruction. This being formed, he contrives such a design, or fable, as may

be most suitable to the moral. After this he begins to think of the persons, whom he is to employ in carrying on his design; and gives them the manners, which are most proper to their several characters. The thoughts and words are the last parts, which give beauty and colouring to the piece. When I say, that the manners of the hero ought to be good in perfection, I contradict not the marquis of Normanby's opinion, in that admirable verse, where, speaking of a perfect character, he calls it

A faultless monster, which the world ne'er knew.

For that excellent critic intended only to speak of dramatic characters, and not of epic. Thus, at least, I have shewn, that in the most perfect poem, which is that of Virgil, a perfect idea was required, and followed. And consequently, that all succeeding poets ought rather to imitate him, than even Homer. I will now proceed, as I promised, to the author of this book. He tells you, almost in the first lines of it, 'that the chief end of painting is to please the eyes: and it is one great end of poetry to please the mind.' Thus far the Parallel of the arts holds true: with this difference; that the principal end of painting is to please; and the chief design of poetry is to instruct. In this the latter seems to have the advantage of the former. But if we consider the artists themselves on both sides, certainly their aims are the very same: they would both make sure of pleasing, and that in preference to instruction. Next, the means of this pleasure is by deceit. One imposes on the sight, and the other on the understanding. Fiction is of the essence of poetry, as well as of painting; there is a resemblance, in one, of human bodies, things, and notions, which are not real; and in the other, of a true story by a

fiction. And, as all stories are not proper subjects for an epic poem, or a tragedy; so neither are they for a noble picture. The subjects both of the one, and of the other, ought to have nothing of immoral, low, or filthy in them; but this being treated at large in the book itself, I wave it, to avoid repetition. Only I must add, that though Catullus, Ovid, and others, were of another opinion, that the subject of poets, and even their thoughts and expressions might be loose, provided their lives were chaste and holy; yet there are no such licences permitted in that art; any more than in painting, to design and colour obscene nudities. *Vita proba est* is no excuse: for it will scarcely be admitted, that either a poet, or a painter, can be chaste, who gives us the contrary examples in their writings, and their pictures. We see nothing of this kind in Virgil: that which comes the nearest to it, is the adventure of the cave, where Dido and Æneas were driven by the storm; yet even there, the poet pretends a marriage before the consummation; and Juno herself was present at it. Neither is there any expression in that story, which a Roman matron might not read, without a blush. Besides, the poet passes it over as hastily as he can, as if he were afraid of staying in the cave with the two lovers, and of being a witness to their actions. Now I suppose, that a painter would not be much commended, who should pick out this cavern from the whole Æneis, where there is not another in the work. He had better leave them in their obscurity, than let in a flash of lightning, to clear the natural darkness of the place, by which he must discover himself, as much as them. The altar-pieces, and holy decorations of painting, show that are may be applied to better uses, as well as poetry.

And amongst many other instances, the Farnese Gallery, painted by Hannibal Carracci, is a sufficient witness yet remaining: the whole work being morally instructive, and particularly the *Herculis Bivium*, which is a perfect triumph of virtue over vice; as it is wonderfully well described by the ingenious Bellori.

Hitherto I have only told the reader what ought not to be the subject of a picture, or of a poem. What it ought to be on either side, our author tells us: it must in general be great and noble. And in this, the Parallel is exactly true. The subject of a poet either in tragedy, or in an epic poem, is a great action of some illustrious hero. It is the same in painting; not every action, nor every person, is considerable enough to enter into the cloth. It must be the anger of an Achilles, the piety of an Æneas, the sacrifice of an Iphigenia (for heroines as well as heroes are comprehended in the rule), but the Parallel is more complete in tragedy, than in an epic poem. For as a tragedy may be made out of many particular episodes of Homer, or of Virgil; so may a noble picture be designed out of this, or that particular story, in either author. History is also fruitful of designs, both for the painter and the tragic poet: Curtius throwing himself into a gulph, and the two Decii sacrificing themselves for the safety of their country, are subjects for tragedy, and picture. Such is Scipio restoring the Spanish Bride, whom he either loved, or may be supposed to love, by which he gained the hearts of a great nation, to interest themselves for Rome against Carthage: these are all but particular pieces in Livy's history, and yet are full complete subjects for the pen and pencil. Now the reason of this is evident. Tragedy and picture are more narrowly circumscribed by the mechanic rules

of time and place, than the epic poem. The time of this last is left indefinite. It is true, Homer took up only the space of eight and forty days for his *Iliad*; but, whether Virgil's action was comprehended in a year, or somewhat more, is not determined by Boissu. Homer made the place of his action Troy, and the Grecian camp besieging it. Virgil introduces his *Aeneas*, sometimes in Sicily, sometimes in Carthage, and other times at Cumae, before he brings him to Laurentum; and even after that, he wanders again to the kingdom of Evander, and some parts of Tuscan, before he returns to finish the war by the death of Turnus. But tragedy (according to the practice of the ancients) was always confined within the compass of twenty four hours, and seldom takes up so much time. As for the place of it, it was always one, and that not in a larger sense, as for example, a whole city, or two or three several houses in it, but the market, or some other public place, common to the chorus and all the actors. Which established law of theirs, I have an opportunity to examine in this place, because I cannot do it without digression from my subject, though it seems too strict at the first appearance, because it excludes all secret intrigues, which are the beauties of the modern stage: for nothing can be carried on with privacy, when the chorus is supposed to be always present. But to proceed, I must say this to the advantage of painting, even above tragedy, that what this last represents in the space of many hours, the former shows us in one moment. The action, the passions, and the manners, of so many persons as are contained in a picture, are to be discerned at once, in the twinkling of an eye; at least they would be so, if the sight could travel over so many different objects all at once, or the mind could digest them all

at the same instant, or point of time. Thus in the famous picture of Poussin, which represents the *institution of the blessed sacrament*, you see our Saviour and his twelve disciples, all concurring in the same action, after different manners, and in different postures: only the manners of Judas are distinguished from the rest. Here is but one indivisible point of time observed: but one action performed by so many persons, in one room, and at the same table: yet the eye cannot comprehend at once the whole object, nor the mind follow it so fast; it is considered at leisure, and seen by intervals. Such are the subjects of noble pictures: and such are only to be undertaken by noble hands. There are other parts of nature, which are meaner, and yet are the subjects both of painters, and of poets.

For, to proceed in the Parallel, as comedy is a representation of human life, in inferior persons, and low subjects, and by that means creeps into the nature of poetry, and is a kind of juniper, a shrub belonging to the species of cedar; so is the painting of clowns, the representation of a Dutch kermis, the brutal sport of *snick* or *snee*, and a thousand other things of this mean invention, a kind of picture, which belongs to nature, but of the lowest form. Such is a Lazar in comparison to a Venus; both are drawn in human figures: they have faces alike, tho' not like faces. There is yet a lower sort of poetry and painting, which is out of nature. For a farce is that in poetry, which grotesque is in a picture. The persons, and action of a farce, are all unnatural, and the manners false, that is, inconsistent with the characters of mankind. Grotesque-painting is the just resemblance of this; and Horace begins his Art of Poetry by describing such a figure, with a man's head, a horse's neck, the wings of a bird, and

a fish's tail; parts of different species jumbled together, according to the mad imagination of the dawber; and the end of all this (as he tells you afterward) is to cause laughter. A very monster in a Bartholomew-fair, for the mob to gape at for their two-pence. Laughter is indeed the propriety of a man, but just enough to distinguish him from his elder brother, with four legs. It is a kind of bastard-pleasure too, taken at the eyes of the vulgar gazers, and at the ears of the beastly audience. Church-painters use it, to divert the honest countryman at public prayers, and keep his eyes open at a heavy sermon. And farce-scribblers make use of the same noble invention, to entertain citizens, country-gentlemen, and Covent-Garden fops. If they are merry, all goes well on the poet's side. The better sort go thither too, but in despair of sense, and the just images of nature, which are the adequate pleasures of the mind. But the author can give the stage no better than what was given him by nature; and the actors must represent such things as they are capable to perform, and by which both they and the scribbler may get their living. After all, it is a good thing to laugh at any rate, and if a straw can tickle a man, it is an instrument of happiness. Beasts can weep when they suffer, but they cannot laugh. And, as Sir William Davenant observes, in his preface to *Gondibert*, *it is the wisdom of a government to permit plays* (he might have added farces) *as it is the prudence of a carter to put bells upon his horses, to make them carry their burdens chearfully.*

I have already shewn, that one main end of poetry and painting, is to please, and have said something of the kinds of both, and of their subjects, in which they bear a great resemblance to each other. I must now consider them, as they are great, and no-

ble arts; and as they are arts, they must have rules, which may direct them to their common end.

To all arts and sciences, but more particularly to these may be applied what Hippocrates says of physic, as I find him cited by an eminent French critic. "Medicine has long subsisted in the world: "The principles of it are certain, and it has a certain way; by both which there has been found in "the course of many ages, an infinite number of "things, the experience of which has confirmed its "usefulness and goodness. All that is wanting to "the perfection of this art will undoubtedly be "found, if able men, and such as are instructed in "the ancient rules, will make a farther enquiry into it, and endeavour to arrive at that which is hitherto unknown, by that which is already known. "But all, who having rejected the ancient rules, "and taken the opposite ways, yet boast themselves "to be masters of this art, do but deceive others, "and are themselves deceived; for that is absolutely impossible."

This is notoriously true in these two arts; for the way to please being to imitate nature; both the poets and the painters, in ancient times, and in the best ages, have studied her: and from the practice of both these arts, the rules have been drawn, by which we are instructed how to please, and to compass that end which they obtained, by following their example. For nature is still the same in all ages, and can never be contrary to herself. Thus, from the practice of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, Aristotle drew his rules for tragedy; and Philostratus for painting. Thus amongst the moderns, the Italian and French critics, by studying the precepts of Aristotle, and Horace, and having the example of the Grecian poets before their eyes, have given us

the rules of modern tragedy: and thus the critics of the same countries, in the art of painting, have given the precepts of perfecting that art. It is true, that poetry has one advantage over painting in these last ages, that we have still the remaining examples both of the Greek and Latin poets: whereas the painters have nothing left them from Apelles, Protogenes, Parrhasius, Zeuxis, and the rest, but only the testimonies which are given of their incomparable works. But instead of this, they have some of their best statues, Basso-Relievos, Columns, Obeliskes, etc. which were saved out of the common ruine, and are still preserved in Italy: and by well distinguishing what is proper to sculpture, and what to painting, and what is common to them both, they have judiciously repaired that loss. And the great genius of Raphael, and others, having succeeded to the times of barbarism and ignorance, the knowlege of painting is now arrived to a supreme perfection, though the performance of it is much declined in the present age. The greatest age for poetry amongst the Romans was certainly that of Augustus Caesar; and yet we are told that painting was then at its lowest ebb; and perhaps sculpture was also declining at the same time. In the reign of Domitian, and some who succeeded him, poetry was but meanly cultivated; but painting eminently flourished. I am not here to give the history of the two arts; how they were both in a manner extinguished, by the irruption of the barbarous nations: and both restored about the times of Leo the tenth, Charles the fifth, and Francis the first; though I might observe, that neither Ariosto, nor any of his contemporary poets, ever arrived at the excellency of Raphael, Titian, and the rest in painting. But in revenge, at this time, or lately, in many coun-

tries, poetry is better practised than her sister-art. To what height the magnificence and encouragement of the present king of France may carry painting and sculpture is uncertain: but by what he has done, before the war in which he is engaged, we may expect what he will do, after the happy conclusion of a peace; which is the prayer and wish of all those who have not an interest to prolong the miseries of Europe. For it is most certain, as our author amongst others has observed, that reward is the spur of virtue, as well in all good arts, as in all laudable attempts: and emulation, which is the other spur, will never be wanting either amongst poets or painters, when particular rewards and prizes are proposed to the best deservers. But to return from this digression, though it was almost necessary; all the rules of painting are methodically, concisely, and yet clearly delivered in this present treatise which I have translated. Bossu has not given more exact rules for the epic poem, nor Dacier for tragedy, in his late excellent translation of Aristotle, and his notes upon him, than our Fresnoy has made for painting; with the Parallel of which I must resume my discourse, following my author's text, though with more brevity than I intended, because Virgil calls me. *The principal and most important part of painting, is to know what is most beautiful in nature, and most proper for that art.* That which is the most beautiful, is the most noble subject: so in poetry, tragedy is more beautiful than comedy; because, as I said, the persons are greater whom the poet instructs; and consequently the instructions of more benefit to mankind: the action is likewise greater and more noble, and thence is derived the greater, and more noble pleasure.

To imitate nature well in whatsoever subject, is

the perfection of both arts; and that picture, and that poem, which comes nearest the resemblance of nature is the best. But it follows not that what pleases most in either kind is therefore good; but what ought to please. Our depraved appetites, and ignorance of the arts, mislead our judgments, and cause us often to take that for true imitation of nature, which has no resemblance of nature in it. To inform our judgments, and to reform our tastes, rules were invented, that by them we might discern, when nature was imitated, and how nearly. I have been forced to recapitulate these things, because mankind is not more liable to deceit, than it is willing to continue in a pleasing error, strengthened by a long habitude. The imitation of nature is therefore justly constituted as the general, and indeed the only, rule of pleasing, both in poetry and painting. Aristotle tells us, that imitation pleases, because it affords matter for a reasoner to enquire into the truth or falshood of imitation, by comparing its likeness, or unlikeness, with the original. But by this rule, every speculation in nature, whose truth falls under the enquiry of a philosopher, must produce the same delight: which is not true; I should rather assign another reason. Truth is the object of our understanding, as good is of our will: and the understanding can no more be delighted with a lie, than the will can choose an apparent evil. As truth is the end of all our speculations, so the discovery of it is the pleasure of them. And since a true knowlege of nature gives us pleasure, a lively imitation of it, either in poetry or painting, must of necessity produce a much greater. For both these arts, as I said before, are not only true imitations of nature, but of the best nature, of that which is wrought up to a noblest pitch. They present us with images more perfect

than the life in any individual: and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of nature united by a happy chymistry, without its deformities or faults. They are imitations of the passions which always move, and therefore consequently please: for without motion there can be no delight; which cannot be considered, but as an active passion. When we view these elevated ideas of nature, the result of that view is admiration, which is always the cause of pleasure.

This foregoing remark, which gives the reason why imitation pleases, was sent me by Mr. Walter Moyle, a most ingenious young gentleman, conversant in all the studies of humanity, much above his years. He had also furnished me (according to my request) with all the particular passages in Aristotle and Horace, which are used by them, to explain the art of poetry by that of painting; which, if ever I have time to retouch this essay, shall be inserted in their places. Having thus shewn that imitation pleases, and why it pleases in both these arts, it follows, that some rules of imitation are necessary to obtain the end: for without rules there can be no art; any more than there can be a house, without a door to conduct you into it. The principal parts of painting and poetry next follow.

Invention is the first part, and absolutely necessary to them both: yet no rule ever was, or ever can be given how to compass it. A happy genius is the gift of nature: it depends on the influence of the stars, say the astrologers; on the organs of the body, say the naturalists; it is the particular gift of heaven, say the divines, both Christians and heathens. How to improve it, many books can teach us; how to ob-

tain it, none; that nothing can be done without it, all agree.

Tu nihil invitâ dices faciesve Minervâ.

Without invention a painter is but a copier, and a poet but a plagiary of others. Both are allowed sometimes to copy and translate; but, as our author tells you, that is not the best part of their reputation. *Imitators are but a servile kind of cattle*, says the poet; or at best, the keepers of cattle for other men; they have nothing which is properly their own. That is a sufficient mortification for me, while I am translating Virgil. But to copy the best author is a kind of praise, if I perform it as I ought. As a copy after Raphael is more to be commended, than an original of any indifferent painter.

Under this head of invention is placed the disposition of the work, to put all things in a beautiful order and harmony; that the whole may be of a piece. The compositions of the painter should be conformable to the text of ancient authors, to the customs, and the times. And this is exactly the same in poetry; Homer, and Virgil, are to be our guides in the epic; Sophocles, and Euripides, in tragedy: in all things we are to imitate the customs, and the times of those persons and things which we represent. Not to make new rules of the drama, as Lopez de Vega has attempted unsuccessfully to do; but to be content to follow our masters, who understood nature better than we. But if the story which we treat be modern, we are to vary the customs, according to the time, and the country, where the scene of action lies: for this is still to imitate nature, which is always the same, though in a different dress.

As in the composition of a picture, the painter is to take care, that nothing enter into it, which is not

proper, or convenient to the subject; so likewise is the poet to reject all incidents which are foreign to his poem, and are naturally no parts of it: they are wrens, and other excrescences, which belong not to the body, but deform it. No person, no incident in the piece, or in the play, but must be of use to carry on the main design. All things else are like six fingers to the hand; when nature, which is superfluous in nothing, can do her work with five. A painter must reject all trifling ornaments; so must a poet refuse all tedious, and unnecessary descriptions. A robe which is too heavy, is less an ornament than a burden.

In poetry, Horace calls these things,

Versus inopes rerum, nugaeque canorae,

These are also the *lucus et ara Dianae*, which he mentions in the same Art of poetry. But since there must be ornaments both in painting and poetry, if they are not necessary, they must at least be decent: that is, in their due place, and but moderately used. The painter is not to take so much pains about the drapery, as about the face, where the principal resemblance lies: neither is the poet, who is working up a passion, to make similes, which will certainly make it languish. My Montezuma dies with a fine one in his mouth: but it is out of season. When there are more figures in a picture than are necessary, or at least ornamental, our author calls them *figures to be let*: because the picture has no use of them. So I have seen in some modern plays above twenty actors, when the action has not required half the number. In the principal figures of a picture, the painter is to employ the sinews of his art: for in them consists the principal beauty of his work. Our author

saves me the comparison with tragedy, for he says, that herein he is to imitate the tragic poet, who employs his utmost force in those places, wherein consists the height and beauty of the action. Du Fresnoy, whom I follow, makes design, or drawing, the second part of painting: but the rules which he gives concerning the posture of the figures, are almost wholly proper to that art; and admit not any comparison, that I know, with poetry. The posture of a poetic figure is, as I conceive, the description of his herdes in the performance of such or such an action: as of Achilles, just in the act of killing Hector: or of Æneas, who has Turnus under him. Both the poet and the painter vary the postures, according to the action, or passion which they represent of the same person. But all must be great and graceful in them. The same Æneas must be drawn a suppliant to Dido, with respect in his gestures, and humility in his eyes: but when he is forced, in his own defence, to kill Lausus, the poet shews him compassionate, and tempering the severity of his looks with a reluctance to the action, which he is going to perform. He has pity on his beauty, and his youth; and is loath to destroy such a masterpiece of nature. He considers Lausus rescuing his father, at the hazard of his own life, as an image of himself, when he took Anchises on his shoulders, and bore him safe through the rage of the fire, and the opposition of his enemies. And therefore in the posture of a retiring man, who avoids the combat, he stretches out his arm in sign of peace, with his right foot drawn a little back, and his breast bending inward, more like an orator than a soldier; and seems to dissuade the young man from pulling on his destiny, by attempting more than he was able to perform: take the passage, as I have thus translated it:

*Shouts of applause ran ringing thro' the field,
To see the son the vanquish'd father shield:*

All, fir'd with noble emulation, strive;

And with a storm of darts to distance drive

The Trojan chief; who held at bay, from far,

On his Vulcanian orb, sustain'd the war.

Eneas thus o'erwhelm'd, on every side,

Their first assault undaunted did abide;

*And thus to Lausus, loud, with friendly threat-
ning cry'd,*

Why wilt thou rush to certain death, and rage

In rash attempts beyond thy tender age,

Betray'd by pious love?

And afterwards,

He griev'd, he wept, the sight an image brought

Of his own filial love; a sadly pleasing thought.

But beside the out-lines of the posture, the design of the picture comprehends in the next place the forms of faces which are to be different: and so in a poem, or a play, must the several characters of the persons be distinguished from each other. I knew a poet, whom out of respect I will not name, who, being too witty himself, could draw nothing but wits in a comedy of his: even his fools were infected with the disease of their author. They overflowed with smart repartees, and were only distinguished from the intended wits, by being called coxcombs; though they deserved not so scandalous a name. Another, who had a great genius for tragedy, following the fury of his natural temper, made every man and woman too, in his plays, stark raging mad: there was not a sober person to be had for love or money: all was tempestuous and blustering; heaven and earth were coming

together at every word; a mere hurricane from the beginning to the end; and every actor seemed to be hastening on the day of judgment.

Let every member be made for its own head, says our author, not a withered hand to a young face. So in the persons of a play, whatsoever is said or done by any of them, must be consistent with the manners which the poet has given them distinctly: and even the habits must be proper to the degrees, and humours of the persons, as well as in a picture. He who entered in the first act, a young man, like Pericles prince of Tyre, must not be in danger, in the fifth act, of committing incest with his daughter: nor an usurer, without great probability and causes of repentance, be turned into a Cutting Moor-craft.

I am not satisfied, that the comparison betwixt the two arts in the last paragraph is altogether so just as it might have been; but I am sure of this which follows.

The principal figure of the subject must appear in the midst of the picture, under the principal light, to distinguish it from the rest, which are only its attendants. Thus in a tragedy, or an epic poem, the hero of the piece must be advanced foremost to the view of the reader or spectator: he must out-shine the rest of all the characters: he must appear the prince of them, like the Sun in the Copernican system, encompassed with the less noble Planets. Because the hero is the centre of the main action, all the lines from the circumference tend to him alone: he is the chief object of pity in the drama, and of admiration in the epic poem.

As in a picture, besides the principal figures which compose it, and are placed in the midst of it, there are less groupings, or knots of figures disposed at proper distances, which are parts of the piece, and

seem to carry on the same design in amore inferious manner: So in epic poetry, there are episodes, and a chorus in tragedy, which are members of the action, as growing out of it, not inserted into it. Such, in the ninth book of the *Æneis*, is the episode of Nisus and Euryalus: the adventure belongs to them alone; they alone are the objects of compassion and admiration; but their business which they carry on, is the general concernment of the Trojan camp, then beleagured by Turnus and the Latines, as the Christians were lately by the Turks. They were to advertise the chief hero of the distresses of his subjects, occasioned by his absence, to crave his succour, and sollicite him to hasten his return.

The Grecian tragedy was at first nothing but a chorus of singers: afterwards one actor was introduced, which was the poet himself, who entertained the people with a discourse in verse, betwixt the pauses of the singing. This succeeding with the people, more actors were added, to make the variety the greater; and in process of time, the chorus only sung betwixt the acts; and the Coryphaeus, or chief of them, spoke for the rest, as an actor concerned in the business of the play.

Thus tragedy was perfected by degrees, and being arrived at that perfection, the painters might probably take the hint from thence, of adding grouppes to their pictures. But as a good picture may be without a grouppe; so a good tragedy may subsist without a chorus: notwithstanding any reasons which have been given by Dacier to the contrary.

Monsieur Racine has indeed used it in his *Esther*, but not that he found any necessity of it, as the French critic would insinuate. The chorus at *St. Cyr*, was only to give the young ladies an occasion

of entertaining the king with vocal music, and of commending their own voices. The play itself was never intended for the public stage, nor without any disparagement to the learned author, could possibly have succeeded there, and much less in the translation of it here. Mr. Wicherly, when we read it together, was of my opinion in this, or rather I of his; for it becomes me so to speak of so excellent a poet, and so great a judge. But since I am in this place, as Virgil says, *Spatis exclusus iniquis*; that is, shortened in my time, I will give no other reason, than that it is impracticable on our stage. A new theatre much more ample, and much deeper, must be made for that purpose, besides the cost of sometimes forty or fifty habits, which is an expence too large to be supplied by a company of actors. It is true, I should not be sorry to see a chorus on a theatre, more than as large and as deep again as ours, built and adorned at a king's charges; and on that condition, and another, which is, that my hands were not bound behind me, as now they are, I should not despair of making such a tragedy, as might be both instructive and delightful, according to the manner of the Grecians.

To make a sketch, or a more perfect model of a picture, is in the language of poets, to draw up the scenery of a play; and the reason is the same for both; to guide the undertaking, and to preserve the remembrance of such things, whose natures are difficult to retain.

To avoid absurdities and incongruities, is the same law established for both arts. The painter is not to paint a cloud at the bottom of a picture, but in the uppermost parts: nor the poet to place what is proper to the end, or middle, in the beginning of a poem. I might enlarge on this, but there are few po-

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ets or painters, who can be supposed to sin so grossly against the laws of nature, and of art. I remember only one play, and for once I will call it by its name, *The Slighted Maid*: where there is nothing in the first act, but what might have been said, or done in the fifth; nor any thing in the midst, which might not have been placed as well in the beginning, or the end. To express the passions which are seated on the heart by outward signs, is one great precept of the painters, and very difficult to perform. In poetry, the same passions and motions of the mind are to be expressed; and in this consists the principal difficulty, as well as the excellency of that art. This (says my author) is the gift of Jupiter: and to speak in the same heathen language, we call it the gift of our Apollo: not to be obtained by pains or study, if we are not born to it. For the motions, which are studied, are never so natural, as those which break out in the height of a real passion. Mr. Otway possessed this part as thoroughly as any of the ancients or moderns. I will not defend every thing in his *Venice preserved*, but I must bear this testimony to his memory, That the passions are truly touched in it, though perhaps there is somewhat to be desired both in the grounds of them; and in the height and elegance of expression; but nature is there, which is the greatest beauty.

In the passions, says our author, we must have a very great regard to the quality of the persons who are actually possessed with them. The joy of a monarch for the news of a victory, must not be expressed like the extasy of a Harlequin on the receipt of a letter from his mistress: this is so much the same in both arts, that it is no longer a comparison. What he says of face-painting, or the portrait of any one

particular person, concerning the likeness, is also as applicable to poetry. In the character of an hero, as well as in an inferior figure, there is a better, or worse likeness to be taken: the better is a panegyric, if it be not false; and the worse is a libel. Sophocles, says Aristotle, always drew men as they ought to be: that is, better than they were. Another, whose name I have forgotten, drew them worse than naturally they were. Euripides altered nothing in the character, but made them such as they were represented by history, epic poetry, or tradition. Of the three, the draught of Sophocles is most commended by Aristotle. I have followed it in that part of OEdipus, which I writ: though perhaps I have made him too good a man. But my characters of Antony and Cleopatra, though they are favourable to them, have nothing of outrageous panegyric; their passions were their own, and such as were given them by history, only the deformities of them were cast into shadows, that they might be objects of compassion: whereas if I had chosen a noon-day light for them, somewhat must have been discovered, which would rather have moved our hatred than our pity.

The Gothic manner, and the barbarous ornaments, which are to be avoided in a picture, are just the same with those in an ill ordered play. For example, our English tragi-comedy must be confessed to be wholly Gothic, notwithstanding the success which it has found upon our theatre; and in the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini, even tho' Corisca and the Satyr contribute somewhat to the main action. Neither can I defend my Spanish Friar, as fond as otherwise I am of it, from this imputation: for though the comical parts are diverting, and the serious moving, yet they are of an unnatural mingle. For mirth and gravity de-

stroy each other, and are no more to be allowed for decent, than a gay widow laughing in a mourning habit.

I had almost forgotten one considerable resemblance. Du Fresnoy tells us, *That the figures of the grouppe, must not be all on a side, that is, with their face and bodies all turned the same way; but must contrast each other by their several positions.* Thus in a play, some characters must be raised to oppose others, and to set them off the better, according to the old maxim, *Contraria juxta se posita, magis elucescunt.* Thus in the Scornful Lady, the usurer is set to confront the prodigal. Thus in my Tyrannic Love, the atheist Maximin is opposed to the character of St. Catherine.

I am now come, though with the omission of many likenesses, to the third part of painting, which is called the *chromatic* or *colouring*. Expression, and all that belongs to words, is that in a poem, which colouring is in a picture. The colours well chosen, in their proper places, together with the lights and shadows which belong to them, lighten the design, and make it pleasing to the eye. The words, the expressions, the tropes and figures, the versification, and all the other elegancies of sound, as cadences, turns of words upon the thought, and many other things, which are all parts of expression, perform exactly the same office both in dramatic and epic poetry. Our author calls colouring, *Lena sororis*, in plain English, *The bawd of her sister*, the design or drawing: she clothes, she dresses her up, she paints her, she makes her appear more lovely than naturally she is, she procures for the design, and makes lovers for her. For the design of itself, is only so many naked lines. Thus in poetry, the expression is that which charms the reader, and beautifies the design,

which is only the out-lines of the fables. It is true, the design must of itself be good: if it be vicious or (in one word) unpleasing, the cost of colouring is thrown away upon it. It is an ugly woman in a rich habit, set out with jewels; nothing can become her. But granting the design to be moderately good, it is like an excellent complexion with indifferent features; the white and red well mingled on the face, make what was before but passable, appear beautiful. *Operum colores*, is the very word which Horace uses, to signify words and elegant expressions, of which he himself was so great a master in his odes. Amongst the ancients, Zeuxis was most famous for his colouring: amongst the moderns, Titian and Correggio. Of the two ancient epic poets, who have so far excelled all the moderns, the invention and design were the particular talents of Homer. Virgil must yield to him in both; for the design of the Latin was borrowed from the Grecian. But the *distinctio* Virgiliana, the expression of Virgil, his colouring, was incomparably the better: and in that I have always endeavoured to copy him. Most of the Pedants, I know, maintain the contrary, and will have Homer excel even in this part. But of all people, as they are the most ill-mannered, so they are the worst judges, even of words, which are their province; they seldom know more than the grammatical construction, unless they are born with a poetical genius, which is a rare portion amongst them. Yet some I know may stand excepted, and such I honour. Virgil is so exact in every word, that none can be changed but for a worse: nor any one removed from its place, but the harmony will be altered. He pretends sometimes to trip, but it is only to make you think him in danger of a fall, when he is most secure. Like a skilful dancer on the ropes (if you will

pardon the meanness of the similitude) who slips willingly; and makes a seeming stumble, that you may think him in great hazard of breaking his neck, while at the same time he is only giving you a proof of his dexterity. My late lord Roscommon was often pleased with this reflection, and with the examples of it in this admirable author.

I have not leisure to run through the whole comparison of lights and shadows, with tropes and figures; yet I cannot but take notice of metaphors, which like them have power to lessen or greaten any thing. Strong and glowing colours are the just resemblances of bold metaphors, but both must be judiciously applied; for there is a difference betwixt daring and fool-hardiness. Lucan and Statius often ventured them too far; our Virgil never. But the great defect of the *Pharsalia*, and the *Thebais*, was in the design: if that had been more perfect, we might have forgiven many of their bold strokes in the colouring, or at least excused them: yet some of them are such as Demosthenes or Cicero could not have defended. Virgil, if he could have seen the first verses of the *Sylvæ*, would have thought Statius mad, in his fustian description of the statue on the brazen horse. But that poet was always in a foam at his setting out, even before the motion of the race had warmed him. The soberness of Virgil, whom he read (it seems to little purpose) might have shown him the difference betwixt *arma virumque cano*, and *magnanimum Acacidem, formidatamque torquenti progeniem*. But Virgil knew how to rise by degrees in his expressions: Statius was in his towering heights at the first stretch of his pinions. The description of his running-horse, just starting in the funeral games for Archemorus, though the verses are wonderfully fine, are the true image of their author.

*Stare adeo nescit, pereunt vestigia mille
Ante fugam; absentemque ferit gravis ungula
campum.*

Which would cost me an hour, if I had the leisure to translate them, there is so much of beauty in the original. Virgil, as he better knew his colours, so he knew better how and where to place them. In as much haste as I am, I cannot forbear giving one example. It is said of him, that he read the second, fourth, and sixth books of his *Æneis* to Augustus Caesar. In the sixth, (which we are sure he read, because we know Octavia was present, who rewarded him so bountifully for the twenty verses which were made in honour of her deceased son Marcellus) in this sixth book, I say, the poet speaking of Misenus, the trumpeter, says,

—*Quo non præstantior alter,*

Ære ciere viros,—

and broke off in the hemistich, or midst of the verse: but in the very reading, seized as it were with a divine fury, he made up the latter part of the hemistich, with these following words,

—*Martemque accendere cantu.*

How warm, nay, how glowing a colour is this! In the beginning of the verse, the word *Æs*, or brass, was taken for a trumpet, because the instrument was made of that metal, which of itself was fine; but in the latter end, which was made *ex tempore*, you see three metaphors, *Martemque*, —*accendere*, —*cantu*. Good heavens! how the plain sense is raised by the beauty of the words. But this was happiness, the former might be only judgment. This was the *curiosa felicitas*, which Petronius attributes to Horace. It is the pencil thrown luckily full upon the

horse's mouth, to express the foam, which the painter, with all his skill, could not perform without it. These bits of words a true poet often finds, as I may say, without seeking: but he knows their value when he finds them, and is infinitely pleased. A bad poet may sometimes light on them, but he discerns not a diamond from a Bristol-stone, and would have been of the cock's mind in Æsop, a grain of barley would have pleased him better than the jewel. The lights and shadows which belong to colouring, put me in mind of that verse of Horace,

Hoc amat obscurum, vult hoc sub luce videri.

Some parts of a poem require to be amply written, and with all the force and elegance of words: others must be cast into shadows; that is, passed over in silence, or but faintly touched. This belongs wholly to the judgment of the poet and the painter. The most beautiful parts of the picture and the poem must be the most finished; the colours and words most chosen; many things in both, which are not deserving of this care, must be shifted off, content with vulgar expressions, and those very short, and left, as in a shadow, to the imagination of the reader.

We have the proverb, *Manum de tabula*, from the painters; which signifies, to know when to give over, and to lay by the pencil. Both Homer and Virgil practised this precept wonderfully well, but Virgil the better of the two. Homer knew, that when Hector was slain, Troy was as good as already taken; therefore, he concludes his action there. For, what follows in the funerals of Patroclus, and the redemption of Hector's body, is not, properly speaking, a part of the main action. But Virgil concludes with the death of Turnus: for after that difficulty was removed, Æneas might marry, and esta-

bliss the Trojans when he pleased. This rule, I had before my eyes in the conclusion of the Spanish Friar, when the discovery was made, that the king was living; which was the knot of the play untied: the rest is shut up in the compass of some few lines, because nothing then hindered the happiness of Torismond and Leonora. The faults of that drama are in the kind of it, which is tragi-comedy. But it was given to the people, and I never writ any thing for myself, but Antony and Cleopatra.

This remark, I must acknowledge, is not so proper for the colouring as the design, but it will hold for both. As the words, *etc.* are evidently shewn to be the clothing of the thought, in the same sense as colours are the clothing of the design; so the painter and the poet ought to judge exactly, when the colouring and expressions are perfect, and then to think their work is truly finished. Apelles said of Protogenes, *That he knew not when to give over.* A work may be over-wrought, as well as under-wrought: too much labour often takes away the spirit, by adding to the polishing: so that there remains nothing but a dull correctness, a piece without any considerable faults, but with few beauties; for when the spirits are drawn off, there is nothing but a *caput mortuum*. Statius never thought an expression could be bold enough; and if a bolder could be found, he rejected the first. Virgil had judgment enough to know daring was necessary, but he knew the difference betwixt a glowing colour and a glaring: as when he compared the shocking of the fleets at Actium, to the jussling of islands rent from their foundations, and meeting in the ocean. He knew the comparison was forced beyond nature, and raised too high: he therefore softens the metaphor with

s credas. You would almost believe, that mountains or islands rushed against each other.

—*Credas innare revulsas*

Cycladas; aut montes concurrere montibus æquos.

But here I must break off without finishing the discourse.

Cynthia aurem vellit, et admonuit, etc. The things which are behind are of too nice a consideration for an essay begun and ended in twelve mornings: and perhaps the judges of painting and poetry, when I tell them, how short a time it cost me, may make me the same answer which my late lord Rochester made to one, who, to commend a tragedy, said it was written in three weeks: how the devil could he be so long about it? For that poem was infamously bad, and I doubt this Parallel is little better: and then the shortness of the time is so far from being a commendation, that it is scarcely an excuse. But if I have really drawn a portrait to the knees, or an half-length, with a tolerable likeness, then I may plead with some justice for myself, that the rest is left to the imagination. Let some better artist provide himself of a deeper canvas; and taking these hints which I have given, set the figure on its legs, and finish it in the invention, design and colouring.

THE END.

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